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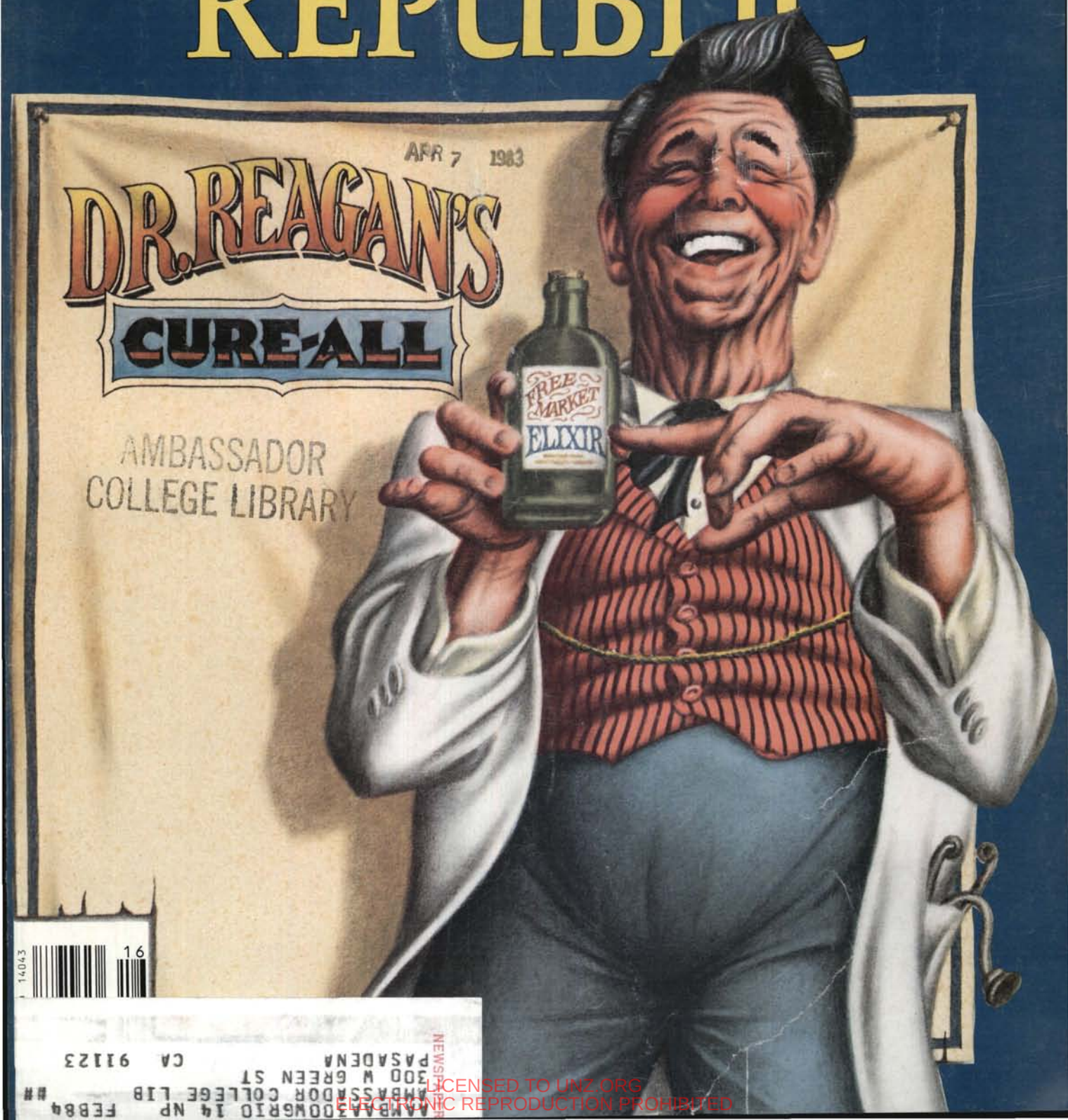

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CORRESPONDENCE

COAL MINER CHIC

To the editors:
Bravo for Henry Fairlie's criticism of *Vanity Fair* ("The Vanity of *Vanity Fair*," TNR, March 21). The most revealing section was that of photographs of coal miners—the only persons shown or mentioned in the entire magazine who are productive—presented as the freak show of some photographer's exhibit at an art gallery. The editors seem to say, "What wonderful liberals we are to display photographs of dirty workers among our Lichtensteins and Warhols." I would love to see Warhol, Lichtenstein, the silly bastards in the ads, and the whole vain gang, in the latest finery from Ralph Lauren and Bill Blass, spend a few years at the bottom of a coal mine. *Vanity Fair* exposes the greatest flaw of New York culture and of the pseudo-liberal establishment: both have become too masturbatory to be meaningful.

BRIAN MARTIN
Hurley, Mississippi

To the editors:
In January I received a subscription invitation to a magazine resurrection. The letter described me as one of "a handful of bright, literate people," someone who buys "good books" and subscribes to "important publications."

The magazine (not *Cosmo*, not *Self*) doing the inviting was called *Vanity Fair* and the publisher was called J. E. Corr Jr. and he said that he knew by his intuition that I was one of the above-mentioned people. Mr. Corr addressed me by my very own name and wrote, "I know that the quality of your reading is high." He also said "you are intrigued by ideas, images, graphics, and photography," "you are excited by our life and times," and he guaranteed that this newest Condé Nast mag would speak to my "intelligence, education, and taste," as well as critique and celebrate "our time" with "dash, allure, intelligence, and a sense of fun." It was to be a "literary feast" right down to the "incomparable printing" on the page.

In a spirit of intellectual derring-do I sent off for Vol. 46, No. 1. Now I have read it. Am I intrigued? (I couldn't find the ideas.) Am I (al)lured? (I couldn't find the sense of fun.) How little of quality $10 million and a lot of pomp and circumstance can make! Henry Fairlie's review was right on. At the risk of offending Mr. Corr Jr., I'm afraid that I may be too literate, the quality of my reading too high for the new *Vanity Fair*. I think I'd best stick with the "important publications" I've been reading all along, like this one for instance.

PATTI HAGAN
Brooklyn, New York

VISIONS OF APOCALYPSE

To the editors:
Charles Krauthammer's "The End of the World" (TNR, March 28) was a brilliant, provocative intellectual exercise. It exhibited erudition, logic, and force. It was overwhelming in its appeal to reason, yet it was profoundly disturbing—particularly in its final goal of permitting us to "go on with our daily business."

The piece was bloodless, passionless, sterile. It is so difficult to wean people away from the "boob tube," to motivate citizens to participate in democracy, to disengage Americans from the mindless pursuit of material plenty and comfort. If "apocalyptic politics" are necessary to jolt people out of their lethargy and apathy and into a concern for saving our civilization from joining the lost and destroyed "Toynbee 17," then "apocalypticists" are rendering a vital public service.

Intellectuals need to be concerned with more than brilliant exercises in logic. Passion, inspiration, yes, appeals to emotionalism can yet save the beleaguered human race. Mr. Senior Editor, you have a responsibility to use your intellect to motivate others to enlightened action in enlightened self-interest directed toward survival.

DANIEL N. HOFFMAN
Santa Clara, California

To the editors:
Charles Krauthammer exemplifies the intellectual as victim of "psychic numbing" when confronted with the nuclear threat. He dodges this way and that in a frantic attempt to avoid facing head-on the real possibility of our nuclear extinction. Those who attempt to do so he labels as Christian fundamentalists longing for the millennium or secularists taking up yet another in a long line of single-issue, ecological causes. Yet nuclear destruction, by tearing apart the very fabric of the natural world, makes impossible the elasticity and adaptability with which human beings in the past have been able to survive and triumph over adversity. If Mr. Krauthammer is determined to go unruffled about his daily business, let him remember that is just what Ronald Reagan, the military planners and the missile manufacturers are doing.

FRANCIS LAIRD
Radnor, Pennsylvania

To the editors:
I found Charles Krauthammer's article quite perverse. While fundamentalists and the nuclear freeze movement may have in common a prediction of the end of the world, one cannot use the silliness of one to discredit the other. Fundamentalists base their predictions on the nebulous imagery in an ancient text, but the nuclear freeze movement is simply reading the laws of physics and counting the warheads piling up.

Mr. Krauthammer says that doomsayers "take insufficient account of the elasticity of human nature and the adaptability of human society." But many anthropologists and psychologists would deny that we are so flexible, and in fact would assert that some very unhealthy kinds of behavior are firmly embedded in us. I for one am not willing to place much hope in the elasticity of human nature. As evidence Krauthammer says that the destruction that leaders couldn't imagine in 1914 has made the superpowers much more cautious today, but he seems to have forgotten all about a war called World War II that occurred in spite of national leaders having had bitter personal experience of the destruction of the previous war.

Krauthammer says we should not be so upset about nuclear weapons because many other societies have faced crises and been destroyed by war. But far from reassuring me, this fact only confirms my fears that we humans are a very unwise and violence-prone species. Now this species has vastly more destructive power than ever before. If humans had discovered nuclear weapons a thousand years ago, it is highly unlikely that there would today exist a Charles Krauthammer to smugly urge us to quit worrying and "go on with our daily business."

DON LAGO
Columbia, Missouri

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FROM WASHINGTON

VIEWS FROM BACKSTAGE

You get to expect anything in Washington. At the end of a conga line in a musical spoof put on by journalists at the annual Gridiron Club gala, a stage Mexican appears in a red serape and pushes back his big sombrero. He *looks* like President Reagan. He *is* President Reagan. He is singing a rollicking song begun by others: "Mañana, Mañana, Mañana is good enough for me." The fashionable audience loves it; from their white tables they applaud wildly.

A transatlantic confrontation begins as the President outlines his nuclear views in a series of speeches. Andropov responds; he says Reagan told "a deliberate lie" and is launching "a runaway race" in armaments.The next day the State Department replies to Andropov, charging him with making a "false allegation" in his charge that the United States seeks military domination over Russia.

Bickering spreads. Maybe Reagan will moderate it in later speeches. As it stands, it means a great deal of peace-marching this summer in Europe as we approach the showdown date when we decide whether or not to deploy new nuclear weapons. The respected former Secretary of State, Edmund Muskie, speaking at the U.S. Coast Guard Academy, describes the situation: "We have seen a shift in U.S. policy from an emphasis on internal reform and indigenous factors to an emphasis on the Soviet and Cuban role. We cannot ignore this role, but are we allowing anti-Communist paranoia to skew our vision?"

"I have not yet heard adequate explanation and justification, and I am *not* persuaded," Muskie says. What really concerns him "is the increasing tendency on the part of our leaders to underestimate the American people's capacity to comprehend compexity." He warns the Administration that they "risk creating the ogre they fear: a public intolerant of ambiguities in a world filled with ambiguity."

Reagan's public comments are not filled with ambiguity, exactly; the problem is knowing how much to discount them. "This partisan Democratic budget," he charged recently, for example, "is a dagger aimed straight at the heart of America's rebuilding program." There is the comment that he made at his first press conference about Soviet leaders, "They reserve unto themselves the right to commit any crime, to lie, to cheat." Odd, coming from a President. *Time* magazine said on December 13, 1982, "In foreign as in domestic policy Reagan can be persuaded to change his mind on major issues only if advisers convince him that he really is not doing so. The beliefs that he does have on foreign affairs are deeply rooted indeed. The strongest is the intense anti-Sovietism that apparently took hold after World War II, when Reagan headed the Screen Actors Guild during a bitter dispute over Communist influence in the movies." Now the tension continues at a higher level.

Presidents come and Presidents go. You can measure passage of time, I sometimes think, by counting the things that we knew couldn't happen. A Roman Catholic couldn't be elected President. Schools couldn't be desegregated. Governments couldn't expand budgets in a Depression. Birth control (pardon me, family planning) couldn't be discussed in terms of national policy. Public welfare was "socialism." American troops couldn't be stationed in Europe in peacetime. And there was another absolute: America couldn't lose a war.

Reagan would add another novelty now, and people laugh, but I have been chastened. He and Defense Secretary Weinberger think nations can knock attacking missiles out of the sky. Even stranger, perhaps, they think that this would diminish world tension. The Secretary said on "Meet the Press" recently, "I would hope and assume that the Soviets . . . would develop about the same time we did the same kind of effective defense, which would then have the effect of totally and completely re-

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THE NEW REPUBLIC
APRIL 18, 1983

NUCLEAR FANTASIES

Ronald Reagan has a knack for changing the subject. In 1982, when his supply-side economics ran into the stone wall of Paul Volcker's monetarism, the President coolly directed most of his State of the Union address to the New Federalism. The New Federalism faded fast, and in six months Mr. Reagan's Star Wars nuclear defense scenario will be as dimly remembered. But for now it has riveted everyone's attention, and diverted it from the real question, nuclear safety in *this* century. Some Administration officials, like hardliner Richard Perle, were against the President's adding this coda precisely because it would overshadow the first part of the President's speech justifying his 1984 defense budget (and because it would alarm our NATO allies). The President pushed ahead regardless, unable, as usual, to resist a simple-looking solution that offers hope for a complex problem. But he has stirred up a hornet's nest, and for a week or two the Op-Ed pages will be buzzing with reasons why this plan can't and shouldn't work.

So it is worthwhile putting the Star Wars issue in perspective. First, both the United States and the Soviet Union have quietly been working on laser and particle beam technology, in the belief that some kind of weapon operating at the speed of light might make an antiballistic missile defense possible in the next generation. By all accounts the Soviet program is somewhat larger than the American one, and the Soviets have already tested the complementary technology of killer satellites. Second, as both the President and his critics admit, we are talking about developments that *might* take place in the next century. Some critics say that an antiballistic missile defense will be impossible even in the twenty-first century, but no one really knows what the technology of the next century will look like. It was once thought that there could be no defense against the bomber.

The interesting argument is not that such a system is impossible (in which case, why worry?) but that it is undesirable. Some say the President's proposal would violate the A.B.M. treaty. It wouldn't. The A.B.M. treaty bans development, testing, and deployment, all of which are probably a decade, if not a generation, away; it does not ban research. But the proposal does traduce the spirit of the A.B.M. treaty, which is that the United States and the Soviet Union agree to coexist in a posture of mutual assured destruction, each holding the other's civilians hostage to a retaliatory attack in case of a first strike.

Deterrence is a fragile and difficult theory. It is under increasing attack, but except for those who believe in unilateral disarmament, its critics have yet to offer a plausible alternative. They put their faith in world government or some change in the human heart. Now the President has come up with his own pie in the sky, albeit one that packs a laser. And while it is true that technological fantasies are more likely to come true than political ones, ray-gun technology is still not likely or proximate enough to warrant a dramatic Presidential unveiling, particularly since the generation the President was addressing is one that will have to live with deterrence. (It is, however, odd to find many in the antinuclear movement who ordinarily insist on the instability, indeed the insanity, of living under a balance of terror now attacking the President on the grounds that the defensive systems he envisions will weaken deterrence. Ironic as it is, the new-found respectability of deterrence theory is a heartening development.)

But to return to the President's proposal: is it worth trying to build any defensive systems in the nuclear age?

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In principle, a perfect defensive shield around the United States would be a momentous development that would turn the clock back to before Hiroshima. But no defensive shield is likely to be perfect, and in the nuclear age an error rate of 1 or 2 percent could mean the death of tens of millions of people. That would mean that any defensive system would have to be extraordinarily, almost flawlessly, effective to be worth deploying, or to give anything but a false sense of security. This possibility is highly unlikely, though one cannot say with certainty that it is impossible.

Another objection is that the contemplated technologies, even if they worked against antiballistic missiles, would not be effective against cruise missiles. But cruise missiles travel at about the speed of jet airplanes. They are not very useful as first-strike weapons. (Neither are bombers.) It is not cruise missiles and jet bombers that put the world on a nuclear hair-trigger; it is the combination of ballistic and nuclear technology. Ballistic missiles cross the globe in minutes and therefore can be first-strike weapons. A world without effective ballistic missiles would be a much safer one than today's world.

THE MOST DIFFICULT PROBLEM with the President's vision is what happens between here and there, assuming we can get there at all. With the two superpowers proceeding at different paces toward antiballistic defenses, the nuclear balance could be radically destabilized. If one side appeared on the verge of being able to destroy the other's ballistic missiles in flight, the chances of war would increase dramatically. The side with the defensive system would be tempted to attack; the side without one would be even more tempted to launch an early first strike before the other's defensive system became operational. One solution for the here-to-there problem is an American offer to share antiballistic missile technology, a new Baruch Plan. If each side knew where the other was in its research, and if both could be assured that they were at roughly equal levels of defensive capacity, we might be able in the next generation safely to enter an era in which the ballistic missile might indeed be rendered obsolete.

The issue is interesting, complicated, not particularly alarming. It is a diversion. The President probably did not intend it as such. He has a habit, and a politically useful one at that, of imparting optimistic visions of the future. Having recently stumbled upon a shining-laser-on-a-hill idea, he could not resist trying it out on the country. In any case, there is no need to settle the issue today. We have a good twenty years to discuss Buck Rogers defenses. There are more pressing questions that will affect our immediate safety, and that are in danger of being obscured by the fog of the President's misty dreams.

The real business today is the freeze. Last week the House of Representatives debated the Zablocki-Markey resolution, calling for a mutual and verifiable nuclear weapons freeze. It voted down an amendment that would have substituted "freeze and/or reductions" for freeze-and-then-reductions. It also voted to permit "maintenance" of our deterrent but not "modernization." But it never got down to the critical vote, which will take place in mid-April. It now appears that the resolution will probably pass, though not by the wide 60-to-100 vote margin that Speaker O'Neill had been predicting some weeks ago. The reason is that the more the freeze proposal is debated, the more problematic it becomes.

In a way it is a pity that the terms of the nuclear arms debate are framed by the freeze proposal. President Reagan is most at fault for letting that happen. President Carter presented the country with a treaty to debate. It was President Reagan's hostility to SALT, and his refusal to articulate an arms control policy, that helped destroy the national consensus on arms control and helped produce a mass movement that has now crystallized around the slogan of the freeze. For better or for worse, it has become the issue Congress now faces. But the issue does not, as its proponents sometimes contend, divide those in favor of arms control from those against it, those for nuclear parity from those for strategic superiority, or those who believe in deterrence from those who don't. And it certainly doesn't divide those who want peace from those who don't, as Representative Ed Markey, co-sponsor of the resolution and its chief defender in the House, would have us believe. "Are we condemned to die together or can we choose to live together? That is our choice today. This is our final option," he told the House. It does divide those who think that mandating the President to negotiate a freeze will make arms control more possible, nuclear deterrence more stable, and the world safer from those who don't.

There are many serious and thoughtful advocates of arms control in the House, such as Representatives Albert Gore Jr. of Tennessee and Les Aspin of Wisconsin, who support the freeze resolution. But it is clear from the qualifying statements, reservations, and amendments introduced by many in this group that the principal reason they support the resolution is to keep the support of a grassroots movement whose energy and commitment they hope can serve to promote more complicated and sensible arms control arrangements. This strategy of coalition-building—one might call it co-optation—is the essence of politics, and we do not denigrate it. But it is important to remember that forging an alliance under the banner of the freeze forces one to make compromises with principle and practicality. Politicians inevitably choose to overlook its obvious deficiencies. We need not.

There are three ways to understand the freeze resolution. First, as a plan, as a negotiating strategy. We have explained in detail why we believe a freeze would make the world not more but less, safe (see "Unfreeze Arms Control," TNR, April 14, 1982). It would lock in current instabilities in the nuclear balance, in particular the vulnerability of the American land-based deterrent; and because of the age of the American deterrent (75 percent is more than fifteen years old, while 75 percent of the Soviet deterrent is less than five years old), with every passing month the other legs of the American triad become more vulnerable, particularly as the freeze does nothing to stop

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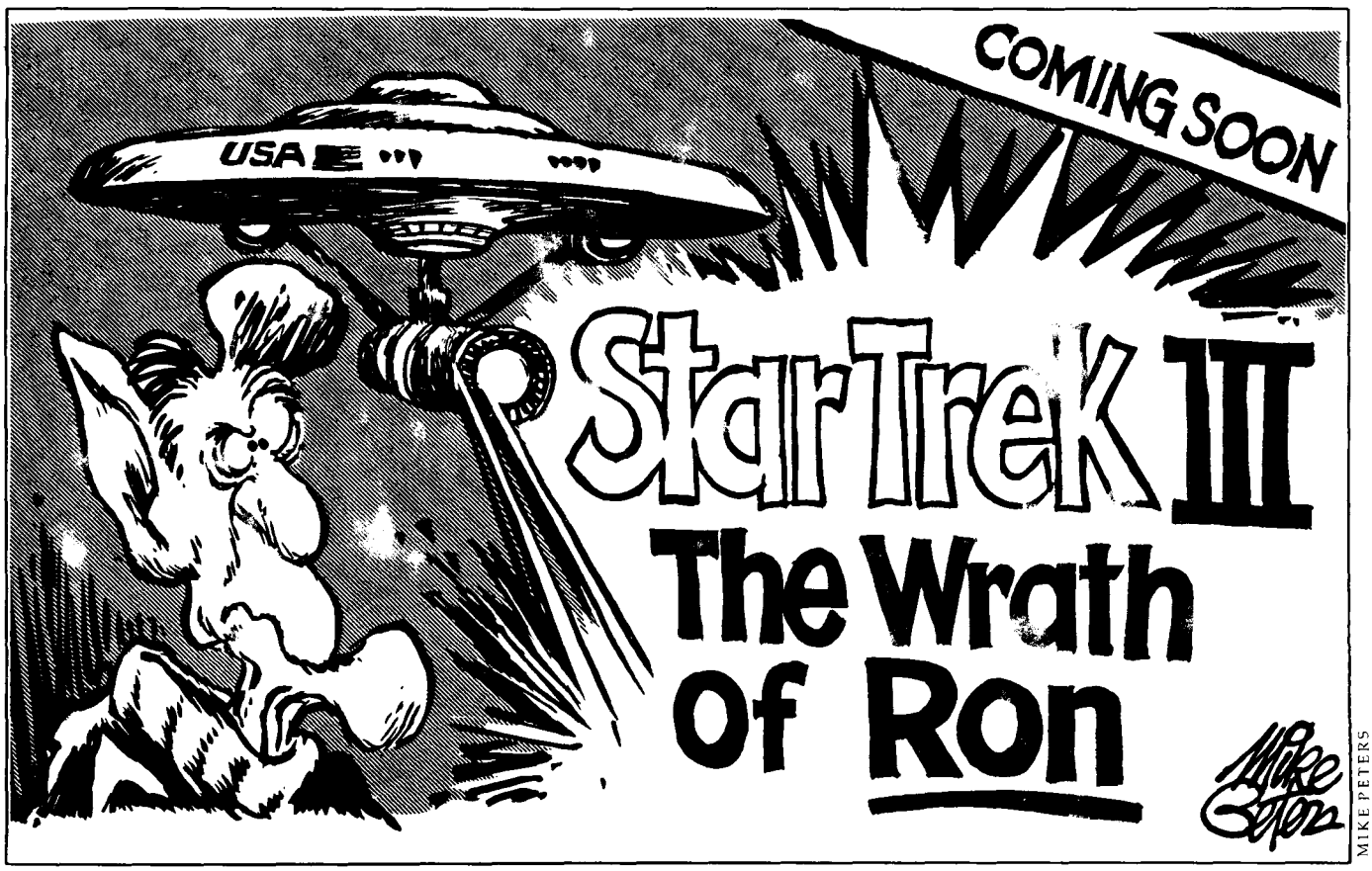
highly destabilizing advances in anti-aircraft, antisubmarine, and antisatellite weaponry. The freeze proponents answer that the way to stop the arms race is to stop it. But there are arms races and there are arms races. What if the arms race means, for example, building the Stealth bomber to replace the B-52? The Stealth bomber is no more destructive than the B-52; it is simply more likely to get to its target, and thus constitutes a more credible *retaliatory* threat. It is not a first-strike weapon. In fact, it is probably the "safest" of all nuclear delivery systems because it is slow and recallable. If the American airborne deterrent is the Stealth, deterrence is strengthened, a first strike made more unlikely, and the world made safer. (We happen to be against the B-1, not because of some abstract aversion to the notion of an arms race but because it is a soon-to-be-obsolete redundancy.) For the United States an "arms race" also means replacing Poseidon submarines with Tridents. One of the things a Trident can do that the Poseidon can't is launch missiles from 6,000 rather than 4,000 miles away from its target. That means that the Trident can hide in larger parts of the ocean and thus be less susceptible to detection. In other words, it helps "stabilize deterrence" and thereby makes the world safer. Similarly, the land-based part of the triad is now a source of instability because it is vulnerable to the huge Soviet arsenal of SS-18s, which a freeze would lock into place. We think an immobile MX is a bad way to solve this problem; it is not invulnerable, it simply makes the Soviets vulnerable too.

But there are alternatives, all of which entail modernization: in other words, continuing the arms race. A year ago, while arguing against the freeze, we published Representative Gore's daring new proposal for reducing the instabilities of the current nuclear balance. Mr. Gore called for replacing all multiple-warhead missiles with single-warhead missiles to eliminate the possibility of a first strike. (Even the most roughly balanced arsenal of single-warhead missiles cannot carry out a successful preemptive strike against the other's forces without disarming the attacker.) The Gore proposal was been taken up by Henry Kissinger in a recent essay in *Time*, and will most likely be presented by the Scowcroft commission as a replacement for (or perhaps an addition to) the MX. The talk is of a Midgetman missile, a mobile, single-warhead device that would be scattered throughout the country.

There are problems with this proposal. Not the least of these is the fact that it could not be deployed without a broad national consensus regarding its necessity, since scattered mobile missiles mean living with nuclear warheads roaming our countryside, perhaps even our highways. Yet a carefully chosen number of these missiles would be invulnerable to a first strike and incapable of carrying one out. Again, it would make the world safer. Under a freeze the United States would not be permitted to deploy such a missile.

The freeze affects not only stability but arms control itself. If it were actually to become U.S. policy, the Geneva Euromissile talks would collapse overnight. The Administration's position at Geneva has been to propose ridding Europe of intermediate nuclear missiles. It will soon move to propose a low and equal level on both sides. A freeze



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would leave the Soviets with hundreds of intermediate warheads aimed at West European cities, with zero on the other side. And once such an arrangement had been frozen into place, it is hard to see what incentives the Soviets would have to reduce their nuclear threat in Europe. Furthermore, freezing Euromissiles would be a catastrophe for NATO. The governments of Britain, Italy, and West Germany have steadfastly supported NATO's 1979 missile decision, with its "two tracks" of negotiating and/or deploying countervailing American missiles. A majority of Germans has just returned to office a government committed to an equal level of forces in Europe and the elimination of Euromissiles if possible. These governments are already under domestic pressure from their own peace movements; a U.S. freeze would make their position impossible. Helmut Kohl and other NATO leaders who have supported the U.S. Euromissile position would find themselves even more humiliated than Helmut Schmidt was in the neutron bomb controversy. Once again our closest friends in Europe would have gone out on a limb, only to find themselves sawed off by American irresolution.

In sum, a freeze makes neither deterrence more stable nor arms control more possible. And it could do grave damage to the alliance. Many proponents of the freeze recognize these deficiencies. They contend that the Zablocki-Markey resolution is not a negotiating strategy but a vote of no confidence in the President, a way of saying that the Reagan Administration is not seriously for arms control. And there is no question that Mr. Reagan's record on arms control before coming into office was abominable. He opposed the limited test ban treaty, SALT I, SALT II, and the A.B.M. treaty. But Richard Nixon went to China; and, more to the point, Paul Nitze, another opponent of SALT II, was seen wandering in the woods of Geneva last summer with the Soviet arms negotiator trying to strike a deal. The Administration thought the timing was wrong. Having waited until after the German elections, principally to avoid the discounting of any new proposal as an election ploy, it is now ready to go forward with a Nitze-like compromise.

This is a bad moment for a vote of confidence. On Euromissiles the President is proceeding sensibly. Of the START talks, we know little. But we do know that it took seven years to negotiate SALT II, and we ought to be willing to give any President at least a term to demonstrate his ability or inability to reach a strategic arms accord with the Russians.

There is a larger issue, a larger cycle of events at work here, and it is troubling. The post-Vietnam breakdown of a national consensus on foreign policy may be making our nation constitutionally unable to reach any arms control agreements. In 1976 and 1980, the right, led by Ronald Reagan, retarded and finally killed SALT II. In this pre-Presidential season, the desire to get political mileage out of the nuclear arms issue—now working the other way—has produced similar shenanigans among Democrats. For example, Senators Cranston and Tsongas have called for the removal of the chief U.S. negotiator at Geneva, Edward Rowny, because of an impolitic personnel memo Mr. Rowny wrote. The memo was foolish, to be sure, but the mock-indignant calls for his resignation over such a relatively minor matter smack of partisanship, and do not serve the cause of arms control.

There is no national consensus over arms control policy, and that fact of life must be accepted. But this doesn't mean that the opposition should, in an unending four-year cycle, try to demolish for political gain the achievements of the other side. President Carter had a mandate to negotiate SALT II, and we regret that it was defeated. We don't know whether Mr. Reagan will produce an I.N.F. or START treaty, but a vote of no confidence at this time would make that goal all the more difficult to achieve.

There are some who support the freeze resolution in the House for none of the above reasons. They intend the Zablocki-Markey resolution neither as a negotiating strategy nor as a no-confidence vote in the Administration, but simply as an expression of the urgency with which they and a vast majority of Americans support the notion of arms control. We share this sense of urgency. And we wish the House would substitute for the current resolution a forthright expression of support for arms control and for pursuing the current negotiations. We do not accuse, and we deplore the Administration's propensity to accuse, supporters of the House freeze resolution of being Russian dupes or unconcerned about American security. We recognize that for many of them there are political constraints that make it impossible to oppose a freeze resolution. But for others the freeze has become a partisan political issue that we believe would make arms control for this Administration and the next (for opposite reasons, of course) almost impossible. A debate on the virtues and perils of nuclear deterrence and how to live in a nuclear age is a salutary exercise for a great democracy. We welcome it. We worry only when it threatens to become a way of carrying out partisan politics by other means.

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AN IRREPLACEABLE MAN

Richard L. Strout has been saying for years—no, decades—that one of these days he was going to up and quit writing TRB. It was kind of a seasonal thing. Every once in a while, usually in the wintertime, he would call us up and say, "Dick Strout here," and then he would start talking about how there comes a time, and how it would be nice to be able to do some leisurely traveling, and how maybe we ought to start thinking about a successor. He always sounded a bit stiff and impatient when making these observations, and he always seemed relieved to change the subject, as he always quickly did, to some new depradation of the gun lobby, or the latest deadlock on Capitol Hill, or what the Secretary of the Treasury had said at breakfast that day. The following Wednesday morning, the first person to enter our building would find, as usual, a fat *Christian Science Monitor* envelope on the lobby floor, with THE NEW REPUBLIC scrawled on it in orange crayon. The envelope contained the week's column, typed on a sturdy manual typewriter, with corrections and deletions marked in thick black pencil. And by the time the cherry blossoms were in bloom the talk of retirement would have long been forgotten.

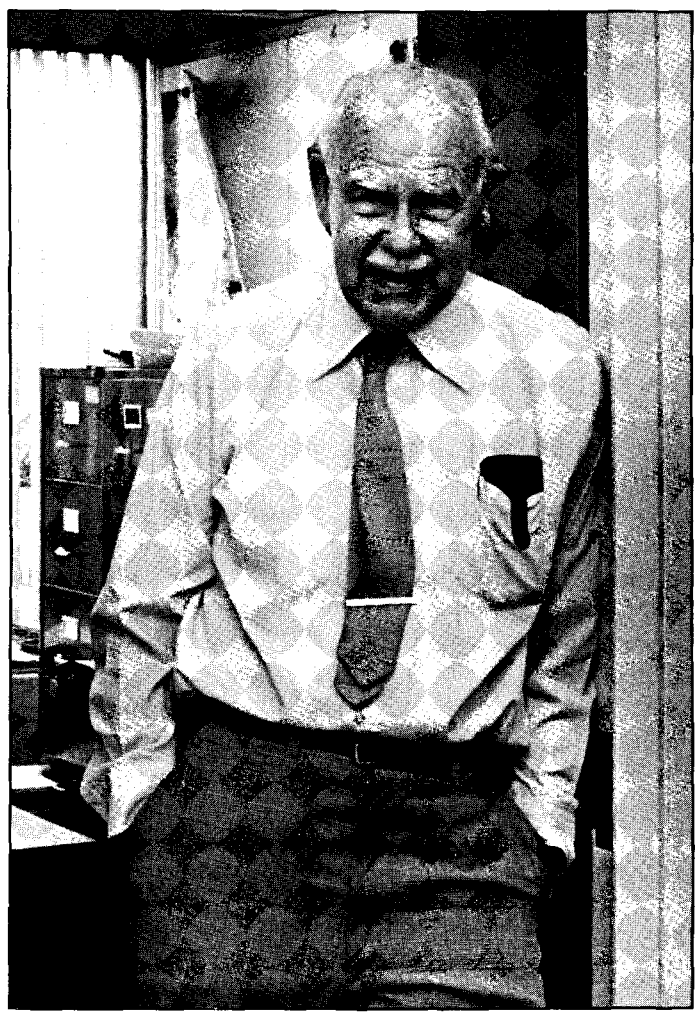

PHOTO OF RICHARD L. STROUT BY NORMAN MATHEMY, THE CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR.

It took him six months to convince us that this time he meant it. Dick Strout likes anniversaries (remember his contribution to our special F.D.R. centenary issue last year?), and last month two of his appeared, Zodiac-like, in fateful conjunction. March 8, 1983, was the fortieth anniversary of his taking over the TRB column, and March 14, 1983, was his eighty-fifth birthday. He thought it would be nice to round things off here with the issue of March 15, but we prevailed on him to give us an extra month to get used to the idea that he wasn't kidding. This week's column is his last as TRB.

Mr. Strout's career spans most of the present century, and his memory, first- and secondhand, takes in the bulk of American history. His people are New England Yankees. "They were Protestants; they were homogeneous; they were farmers," he wrote in 1965. When he was a boy "the war" still meant the Civil War, and he came of age as a soldier in another war, the one that was supposed to end all wars. In 1919 he went to England, carrying a letter of introduction from one of his teachers at Harvard, Harold Laski, to the legendary editor of the *Manchester Guardian*, C.P. Scott. Scott helped him get his first job in journalism, on the *Sheffield Independent*. Two years later he was back in the United States, writing briefly for *The Boston Post* and then for the *Monitor*, whose Washington bureau he joined in 1925. He has been there ever since—always as a reporter, never as an executive or a free-floating thinker. He was a veteran correspondent by 1943, when Bruce Bliven asked him to take over THE NEW REPUBLIC's anonymous Washington column.

The column had been appearing since 1925, written by a succession of capable reporters, including Frank R. Kent, Jonathan Mitchell, and Kenneth Crawford. Aimed at an audience that regarded serious politics as something that was unlikely to occur in Washington, it was basically a weekly compendium of opinionated inside dope. Strout quickly turned it into something broader, and finer. The first sentence of his first column—"I wonder how well the country understands the pessimism that broods over Washington these days?"—has been widely quoted lately, as word of his departure began to leak out. But the end of that column gives a better idea of the vision he would bring to the job. "What the country craves is a moral tonic," he wrote. "Announcement of specific, idealistic, postwar aims, or some approach to it, would help Mr. Roosevelt in Congress; it would help the men in the factories; it might give the boys in the trenches a lot of help, too. Laugh if you want. But when a man dies, he wants to die for something important." That's Strout as TRB—always conscious of the tension between the country's ideals and its actual state, yet always firmly rooted in the news, in what's going on right now.

You don't get out of Strout's church without hearing the

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sermon, but the hymns are lovely. Part of the pleasure of reading him has always been aesthetic. He writes beautifully. He looks and listens, and tells you what he has seen and heard in vivid, simple words. His prose can hold its own with that of his friend E.B. White (with whom he once wrote a book, *Farewell to the Model T*, published in 1936). In his twentieth anniversary column he indulged in a bit of self-criticism, deploring his "staccato literary style"—the result, he thought, of trying "to cram too many ideas into 800 words, like the coats bulging in a closet at a cocktail party." That nice simile refutes him: he can't help writing well. In nearly every column, people come to life. A few samples, randomly culled: J. Edgar Hoover, "with a round, florid, bulldog face, strong jaw, and rather pop eyes"; Joe McCarthy, "lumpish and slump-shouldered": McCarthy's ally William Jenner, "angry from the nipple on"; "elegant, ruddy-faced" Dean Acheson at a hearing, "his upper-class voice heard above the strident cameras"; Sam J. Ervin, "the new Democratic hero, whose tic sends his eyebrows up and down like awnings"—this one twenty years before Watergate.

MR. STROUT is a reporter who does his own legwork, but he has provided his readers with more than just coverage. Week by week he has written the moral history of his time. He has a faith in reason tempered by an awareness of human frailty, a keen nose for cant, and an unerring, almost unconscious instinct for justice. Looking back over his work, it is astonishing how seldom he has been taken in by faddish enthusiasms, how right he has been about the moral choices of his time: right about the imperatives of racial and economic justice, about McCarthyism, about Stalinism, about the character of the men and events he has witnessed. He is a patriot without bluster, as devoted to the first ten amendments of the Constitution as he is critical of its original articles—a favorite hobbyhorse. (He would like to break the machinery of government loose from the separation of powers, a notion that looks less cranky all the time.) He has the wisdom of his years without any of the cynicism that long exposure to the folkways of his city is supposed to impart. Firm in his convictions, sharp in his judgments, he is yet generous and respectful to those who disagree with him. Most impressive of all is the undimmed fire of his conscience, which moves in him not only to anger at folly, indifference, or cruelty, but also to delight at courage or kindness, both of which he possesses in full measure.

He has earned a break, but it remains to be seen how much of one he will actually take. Besides relinquishing TRB, he says, he's going to cut back a bit on the daily general assignment reporting, so that he can spend more time with his family (his wife Ernestine, five children, and eleven grandchildren). We'll miss him in these pages, but we won't have to miss him around town. He isn't going anywhere. Richard L. Strout can continue to be found behind his roll-top desk at the *Monitor* bureau. And the word is that from now on he plans to write two columns a week for his paper instead of just one.

Racial Brush Fires

All over the country there have been flare-ups of racism in recent months. Some are the doing of whites, others of blacks. In California last fall, Los Angeles Mayor Tom Bradley narrowly lost the gubernatorial election at least partly because he is black. Last year, black students at Harvard Law School threatened to boycott a civil rights course taught by Jack Greenberg, director of the N.A.A.C.P. Legal Defense and Educational Fund, who is white. This year, black students at Stanford University forced the cancellation of a similar course to be taught by Mr. Greenberg. In New York, blacks are threatening a city-wide school boycott if Mayor Edward Koch appoints Deputy Mayor Robert Wagner Jr., who is white, to be chancellor of the school system instead of Thomas Minter, the current deputy chancellor, who is black.

And then there is Chicago, where both mayoral candidates are making race practically the only campaign issue. Harold Washington, who ran in the Democratic primary against two whites, won largely by appealing for—and gaining—a massive black turnout. Now his Republican opponent, Bernard Epton, is capitalizing on racial polarization among Democrats by running TV ads showing white citizens criticizing Washington and closing with the slogan: "Epton for Mayor. Before it's too late."

Some of Mr. Washington's supporters have implied there will be violence in Chicago if he is not elected, and some of Mr. Epton's backers have hinted that there will be violence if Mr. Washington is elected. And the contest has implications beyond ugliness in Chicago. Jesse Jackson, who is thinking about mounting a black candidacy for President, says that the Chicago mayoralty is a litmus test for the Democratic Party. The implication is that if Mr. Washington loses, Mr. Jackson will run against the party.

There is another black-white mayoral contest going on in Philadelphia—pitting the white bully boy ex-Mayor, Frank Rizzo, against the black city administrator, Wilson Goode. Until recently the city seemed to be avoiding the bitterness prevailing in Chicago. Now Mr. Rizzo is trying to import a little of Chicago's racial venom to help his own campaign—by endorsing Mr. Epton—but he is trailing by a two-to-one margin.

It would be a mistake to focus on local brush fires and to forget the parched national climate that creates the potential for combustion. Reaganism and recession are responsible. As a candidate, Mr. Reagan appealed now and again to white racism, notably in his references to "welfare queens" and "young bucks" who supposedly buy steak and vodka with food stamps. As President, Mr. Reagan has virtually abandoned the enforcement of civil rights laws. His budget cuts have savaged programs created for the poor while leaving middle-class entitlement benefits intact. He has attempted to justify this unfairness by encouraging the well off to think that the poor somehow enjoy their dependency and that it's a favor (cruel though

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it may seem) to take benefits away from them. The Reagan recession has compounded the chronic problem of black unemployment by increasing white unemployment and creating new competition for scarce jobs.

The black elites—such as law students—and political and civil rights leaders have been misdirecting their energies by attacking friends like Mr. Wagner and Mr. Greenberg instead of enemies. But the black population has been right about Mr. Reagan from the beginning. In 1980 blacks were the only group to increase their margin of support for Jimmy Carter over 1976. In 1981 a Democratic Party poll found that all other groups said they liked Mr. Reagan personally, whether or not they agreed with his policies, while 53 percent of blacks said they disliked both him and his policies. Last month an ABC-*Washington Post* poll found that 74 percent of blacks feel that President Reagan's policies have been unfair to them. It also found that 67 percent of whites disagree with that opinion, and that Democrats are split down the middle, 42 percent agreeing, 45 percent disagreeing—one more mark of the increasing polarization of the voting public under this President.

For blacks, Democrats, and all others who value a unified society, the appropriate targets of outrage are the Administration, racial discrimination, denial of opportunity, and economic contraction. Students at Harvard Law School managed to reach an agreement that allowed Jack Greenberg to teach—sharing the fruits of a lifetime of service in the cause of civil rights—and at the same time placed demands on Harvard for increased minority hiring. At Stanford, Mr. Greenberg withdrew when his course became hostage to demands both for increased minority hiring (the university has only 21 blacks on its faculty of 1,266) and for maintenance of an African history course that lacked accreditation and wide student support.

In the New York school case, blacks are opposing a highly able white candidate for chancellor, Robert Wagner, and supporting a less-qualified black solely on the issue of race. Mr. Wagner has fought successfully for the schools' budgets and understands New York's political intricacies, whereas Mr. Minter has a background in school administration, but is deemed by Frank Macchiorola, the outgoing chancellor, as politically inept and unwilling to make tough decisions. The true target of black leaders in New York is Mayor Koch, whom they accuse of favoring whites in hiring and in the dispensation of services. They should not be attacking Mr. Wagner instead, and they should not under any circumstances resort to a school boycott, which hurts children, to make their point.

In Chicago, race has become the issue, and Bernard Epton deserves to be defeated if he persists in fanning antiblack animosity. Mr. Washington was slow to reach out to the white community after his nomination, but he has not run an antiwhite campaign in any sense, and there is a huge moral difference between mobilizing blacks—or any other ethnic group—to support one of their own and stirring up racial animosities for political advantage. The former has a long and honored tradition in American politics that reached its pinnacle in the overwhelming support that Catholics gave to John F. Kennedy in 1960. The latter has a long and dishonored tradition that we hoped had been put to rest with George Wallace's third-place finish in 1968.

If race remains the key issue in Chicago, and Mr. Washington loses, blacks have a right to be bitterly disappointed, but there is cause neither for resorting to violence nor for breaking up the Democratic Party. Nor can Mr. Washington's liabilities be discounted: his conviction and imprisonment for failure to file income tax returns for four years, his suspension from legal practice for taking fees and not performing services, and his reputation for personal and administrative disorganization. America and the Democratic Party, though, have proved again and again that blacks can be elected and re-elected as big city mayors. National Democrats are rallying behind Mr. Washington and will support Wilson Goode if he beats Frank Rizzo in Philadelphia. The time will come, Tom Bradley's defeat notwithstanding, when America has black state governors and additional black U.S. Senators, and the likelihood is that they will be Democrats, too.

And some day America will have a black President—probably a Democrat, but conceivably a Republican or third party candidate. For the moment, though, it is hard to imagine a black third party candidacy doing anything but helping Ronald Reagan get re-elected. So if Jesse Jackson or someone else decides to mount a serious Presidential candidacy in 1984, it ought to be designed to strengthen, not weaken, the Democratic Party.

NOTEBOOK

□ RICHARD STROUT'S departure is a logical moment to review the current state of research on the perennial question: what do the initials TRB stand for? The orthodox theory, favored by Mr. Strout himself, is this: in 1925, an editor was on his way from Manhattan to Brooklyn, where the magazine was then printed, with the copy for the first column. He noticed a sign with the letters BRT (for Brooklyn Rapid Transit), and simply reversed them. But Mr. Strout didn't hear this story until nearly twenty years later, and anyway, there's no such line as the BRT. Another theory is that the initials stand for Times Roman Bold, a well-known typeface. John Midgley, of *The Economist*, who has investigated the matter, offers two additional possibilities. The first is a variation on the subway theory: the editor took the initials IRT (for Interboro Rapid Transit) and BMT (for Brooklyn Manhattan Transit), and crunched them together. These lines actually exist, which adds verisimilitude. The other hypothesis is that the column was originally written by a revolving stable of young reporters, who were jokingly called The Rover Boys after a popular series of juvenile adventure stories. No one knows for sure. The mysterious provenance of TRB remains, appropriately, a matter of opinion.

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□ TWENTY YEARS AGO IN THE NEW REPUBLIC: "It was a lively week for a change. To start with, the Committee on House Administration solemnly confronted reporter Jack Anderson and demanded to know who his 'Anonymous Congressman' was. This suppositious 'Congressman,' speaking in the first person through the medium of articulate Mr. Anderson in *Parade*, March 24, reported that most of his colleagues were honest but some padded payrolls, misused public funds, sold influence. Congress is hypersensitive just now, and has every reason to be. Its prestige is sinking individually and institutionally, and it feels unloved. Committee chairman Omar Burleson dramatically installed a telephone right by his hand as he started to question Anderson (so he could call the Anonymous Congressman, see?—when he found his name). Anderson, a large, cool blond who seemed able to take care of himself, counterployed; wild horses wouldn't drag the name from him, he said, but he would love to reveal the names of half a dozen unethical Congressmen. Mr. Burleson shuddered and recoiled. It ended in a lively shouting match in the small room, with one burly Congressman near this writer threatening to settle it man-to-man with an Anderson stalwart." ("Congressional Shudders," TRB From Washington, April 20, 1963.)

Jaruzelski's insult to Warsaw's martyrs.

SPECIOUS CEREMONIES

FORTY YEARS AGO, on April 19, 1943, German troops under the command of *SS-und-Polizeiführer* Jürgen Stroop entered the Warsaw Ghetto. Their task, as spelled out in an order issued by Himmler himself, was to liquidate the remnant of the Jewish community (50,000 of a prewar population of more than 360,000). The *Aktion* was supposed to last three days; instead, it lasted nearly seven weeks. Seven hundred fighters, armed with no more than homemade Molotov cocktails and a handful of pistols and rifles, and supported by nearly all of the Ghetto's inhabitants, engaged the *Wehrmacht* and SS detachments in sporadic battles, seeking shelter in makeshift bunkers and underground passages that had been feverishly constructed in the preceding months. The Germans brought in tanks, heavy artillery, and planes, eventually turning the entire Ghetto into a blazing inferno. When it was over, not a single building remained standing. Thousands of Jews were seized and deported to the death camps of Treblinka and Majdanek; some managed to make their way through the sewers to the "Aryan side"; most remained buried under the rubble of their one-time homes.

The anniversary of this searing event has been marked by Jews and non-Jews for the past four decades. From April 11 to 14, for instance, a series of commemorative meetings sponsored by the American Gathering of Holocaust Survivors will be held in Washington, D.C., and there will be similar ceremonies throughout the world. But the most curious of them all will take place in Warsaw, chiefly around the Monument to the Heroes of the Warsaw Ghetto, which was erected in 1948. The organizers are the Polish authorities—that is, the military regime of General Jaruzelski. This is not the first time that Poland's Communist rulers have taken it upon themselves to honor those who died in the Warsaw Ghetto. Once every April the monument—which for most of the year stands neglected and unnoticed—has been the scene of solemn military parades and speeches by regime officials, who use it as an opportunity to make inflated claims about the Polish underground's assistance to the Ghetto fighters, and to lash out against the depradations of the West, including, from time to time, "international Zionism."

THIS YEAR the Polish authorities are outdoing themselves. An "Honorary Committee to Commemorate the 40th Anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising" has been established. Among its members is the notorious General Moczar, who, as head of the security services and of the "Union of Fighters for Freedom and Democracy," presided over the anti-Semitic witch hunt of 1968-1969. This committee sent appeals to Jewish organizations throughout the world, and the Polish travel agency Orbis placed an ad in the travel section of *The New York Times* that announced a "Grand Pilgrimage" to Poland (starting price $1,308), with kosher food and all the trimmings, and a visit to the Soviet Union.

The "Socio-Cultural Union of Jews in Poland," representing (if that is the word) perhaps 5,000 to 6,000 elderly survivors living out their lives at the sufferance of Jaruzelski & Co., was enlisted in an effort to persuade European, American, and Israeli Jews to attend the ceremonies. The Warsaw Synagogue has been restored and refurbished, and will be formally dedicated on April 18 "with the participation of three cantors." (Where those cantors will come from is a mystery. The Jewish community in Warsaw has no cantor, and the last rabbi left Poland in 1969, after spending a year in prison, without a trial, for his protests against the destruction of Jewish cemeteries.) In addition, promises have been made that outside participants are welcome not only to observe, but to play an active role in the various scheduled events.

As it looks now, the Polish government can congratulate itself on having scored an important propaganda success. The World Jewish Congress, including its American section, is sending a number of high-ranking officials. A large delegation from Israel, headed by the Minister of Education, Zevulun Hammer, is soon to depart. The Board of Jewish Deputies in Great Britain, after an acrimonious internal debate, will be prominently represented. Yet this is the same government whose current Foreign Minister approved the formation, in 1981, of an outspo-

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kenly anti-Semitic organization called the Grunwald Patriotic Union; whose radio station on December 15, 1981, attacked Bronislaw Geremek, Solidarity's chief adviser, as a Jew who made it his business to "ruin every scholar who showed any sympathy for Poland"; which will soon put on trial five members of the Social Self-Defense Committee, K.O.R., one of whom, Adam Michnik, has been singled out as a "Zionist . . . prepared to torture [his] patriotic, and especially military, opponents"; and whose press spokesman, Jerzy Urban, with an insouciance perhaps dictated by his own Jewish origin, recently wrote in a Polish journal that "the bloodthirstiness of Zionist doctrine and practice," and "genocide in its Israeli edition" are a "compensation" for the one-time traditional "passivity" of the Jews.

Several weeks ago Dr. Marek Edelman, deputy commander of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, the only surviving leader of the Jewish Fighting Organization living in Poland, and a delegate to Solidarity's first national Congress, issued a statement that reads:

> I was invited to join the Honorary Committee to Commemorate the 40th Anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising. I wish to explain why I refused.
>
> Forty years ago we did not fight merely to survive—we fought for life in dignity and freedom. To celebrate our anniversary here, where enslavement and humiliation are now the lot of the whole society, where words and gestures have become nothing but lies, would betray the spirit of our struggle. It would mean participating in something entirely to the contrary, it would be a cynical act of contempt.
>
> I shall not be a party to this, nor will I condone the participation of others, regardless of where they come from, whatever their credentials. The true memory of the victims and heroes, of the eternal human striving for truth and freedom, will be preserved in the silence of graves and of hearts—far from the manipulative ceremonies.

In keeping with the spirit of this statement, the Workmen's Circle and the Jewish Labor Committee in the United States have issued statements denouncing the Warsaw commemoration, and urging others to do the same. The American Jewish Committee has decided to send only one person. Yet the World Jewish Congress—the prime mover of Western Jewish participation—is still determined to go. Rabbi Alexander Schindler of the American Hebrew Congregations will be an active delegate, as will other prominent personalities from various countries.

THOSE WHO DECIDED to accept the invitation from Warsaw may feel, as a statement of the World Jewish Congress put it, that they cannot refuse to take part in a ceremony at a "place drenched with Jewish blood." It is difficult to know what obscure political reasons have led the Israeli government to countenance the participation of one of its ministers and other notables. But they should all be aware that the taint of appearing on the same platform with General Moczar and with other representatives of a regime despised by the overwhelming majority of the Polish population cannot be easily erased. Their presence will not be of the slightest benefit to the pitiful remnant of Polish Jews, and is only bound to be used by Jaruzelski to legitimize his dictatorship in the eyes of world Jewry and of the world at large. Non-Communist participants should ponder again the words of Dr. Edelman—that on Polish soil, under present conditions, the true memory of the Warsaw martyrs can best be preserved "in the silence of graves and of hearts," and not by conferring an imprimatur on a rank exercise in deception.

ABRAHAM BRUMBERG
& RICHARD T. DAVIES

Abraham Brumberg, a contributing editor to TNR, is the editor of the recently published *Poland: Genesis of a Revolution* (Random House and Vintage Books). Richard T. Davies was U.S. Ambassador to Poland from 1973 to 1978.

The clock can't be turned back.

ADENAUER'S GRANDSON

Bonn

FORWARD INTO THE FIFTIES! jeered the Social Democratic weeklies. And well they might, hearing the mawkish rhetoric in which Chancellor Kohl—"Adenauer's grandchild"—loves to indulge. Mr. Kohl offers to take what he calls "the free part of our *Vaterland*" back to the simple certainties of the Adenauer era. West Germany will stand at attention and get its hair cut. Employers and the police will be given a freer hand. There will be more market and less social in the "social market economy," invented by the Christian Democrats in the 1950s. The old German trinity of *Kinder, Küche, Kirche* (children, kitchen, church) will again point the woman's straight and narrow way. Most important, the stepchild of American democracy will once again honor its parents: West Germany will be the United States most loyal European ally, gratefully accepting missiles like birthday presents, and remembering to write its thank-you letters.

These sentiments matter. The missile issue may not have been decisive in the election (taking fourth place to various economic issues in opinion polls), but the election probably has been decisive for the missile issue. The Kremlin must now know that if it does not reach a negotiated agreement in Geneva, the Kohl-Genscher government will start stationing cruise and Pershing II missiles on West German soil at the end of this year.

Yet the rhetoric of conservative restoration can also mislead. Among the many areas in which the new government either will not or cannot put the clock back, two

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should be particularly noted in Washington. Both follow, in different ways, from a phenomenon common to all parties in this election: a startling frankness and self-confidence in the articulation of German national interests, whether from Mr. Kohl, with his talk of the *Vaterland*, or from the S.P.D., with its campaign slogan "In German Interests," or from the Greens, with their complaint that NATO missiles violate (West) Germany's national sovereignty. There is, moreover, a striking consensus that German national interests have basically been well served by the web of political and economic ties with the Soviet bloc that passes under the label of Ostpolitik. If you consider that just a decade ago Ostpolitik was the central subject of contention between the Christian and Social Democrats, in an election campaign much more abusive than this one, it is all the more remarkable that Ostpolitik was not an issue in this election. If anything, it has been an issue between the new coalition partners, between Mr. Strauss on one side and Mr. Kohl and Mr. Genscher on the other, than between left and right, government and opposition.

NO DOUBT the weight of Mr. Strauss, even though he remains in Munich, will ensure some shift of emphasis in the new government's policy toward the East, and specifically a tougher bargaining posture vis-à-vis East Germany. Yet in a historical perspective, what is remarkable is the continuity from the Schmidt to the Kohl government in foreign as well as security policy (represented by the personal continuity of Mr. Genscher, malleable changeling though he may be), which means, in foreign policy, the fundamental *change* for the Adenauer era.

In Bonn, Ostpolitik is seen to have served German interests in three main ways. First, it has freed West Germany's hands from the bonds of the "Hallstein doctrine" (which stipulated that West Germany would not recognize any state that recognized East Germany) and a crippling, day-to-day dependence on the United States (e.g., for the defense of West Berlin, now stabilized by the Four-Power Agreement), and thus has given the Federal Republic a new independence in world affairs. No longer is it the "economic giant, political dwarf" of the late 1960s.

Second, some 6 percent of West Germany's trade is now with the East, and in a time of recession and high unemployment no government will count that lightly. Nor will the sectors of heavy industry that are especially heavily committed a) to trade with the East and b) to Chancellor Kohl's party.

Third, the West Germans consider that their dramatically improved relations with the East German regime have served the long-term goal of national unity enshrined in the Federal Republic's "Basic Law." The Germans in East and West have moved closer together in the last ten years. Ostpolitik may not have served the cause of democracy in East Germany, as its original Social Democratic architects hoped—indeed, East Germany is a more efficient police welfare state than it was ten years ago, subsidized by West German funds—but it has served the cause of Germanity. A conservative government that places such a high value on national unity will not lightly sacrifice these perceived gains.

So in his first press conference after becoming Chancellor, Kohl reaffirmed his commitment to "constructive relations" with the East German government "for the benefit of the people in both parts of Germany." What he did not say, but what senior diplomats will tell you frankly, is that in order to have "constructive relations" with the East German government, West Germany must have "constructive relations" with the Soviet government. The West German government therefore has a special perceived national interest in good relations with Moscow. Incidentally, this is of course the historical norm over the last two centuries, as the Poles have discovered. It was the Adenauer era that was the historical exception, with its conscious defiance of geopolitics in the assertion that West Germany was basically interchangeable with California. In practical terms this means that the Kohl government, like the Schmidt government, is going to argue with Washington, from the base of perceived national interest, on a whole range of issues. For example, in 1962 the Adenauer government bowed to American pressure by supporting an embargo on pipeline for the Soviet Union. In 1982 the Schmidt government defied American pressure for a similar pipeline embargo. If a similar disagreement arises in the next four years, I have no doubt that "Adenauer's grandchild" will behave like Schmidt rather than like Adenauer.

THE SECOND AREA that should cause "doubt in celebration" in Washington is an area where a conservative government cannot, rather than will not, put the clock back. It concerns the attitude of what Joseph Joffe has described in these pages as "pacifist nationalism," which has brought the Greens into the Bundestag (see "The Greening of Germany," TNR, February 14). The problem here is not what the Greens will do inside Parliament (where their pleas for "indiscreet democracy" should be invigorating), but what they may do outside Parliament. Parliament, they say, is only one "leg" of their understanding of democracy. The other "leg" is the extra-parliamentary movement. They will, as the lawyer Otto Schily rather grudgingly puts it, "submit to the democratic game." However, when they are convinced that they have a majority in the country, but not in Parliament, on a particular issue, then they will not be bound by parliamentary rules. Such an issue is the stationing of cruise and Pershing II missiles, which they claim (on the basis of opinion polls) is opposed by more than 50 percent of the population. On the basis of this "demoscopic majority," they propose a massive campaign of civil disobedience, with peaceful blockades of missile sites, sit-ins, protest marches, and hunger strikes. Ms. Petra Kelly, their best known figurehead, quotes Gandhi, the suffragettes, and Martin Luther King. One of their national spokespeople, Mr. Reiner Trampert, told the weekly *Die Zeit*: "I would support a nonviolent civil war."

Now, the peace women of Greenham Common in Brit-

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ain, just up the road from where I live, are saying almost identical things, proposing the same methods, citing the same precedents. They too can point to opinion polls that show majorities of 54 percent (*Sunday Times*) and 61 percent (*Guardian*) against stationing cruise missiles in this country. Why, then, am I ringing alarm bells about West Germany, but not about Britain? The answers have to do with what political scientists call "political culture" (what I believe we used to call "history"). There are no British Greens because the peace and antinuclear protest is still expressed through the established parties in a way which, despite the best trimming of Mr. Vogel, it clearly is not in West Germany. There is, in my view, a much more profound revolt against America—and everything that is identified with it—among the younger generation in West Germany than anywhere else in Western Europe, not least because West Germany is the most Americanized country in Europe.

BUT THE CRUCIAL difference is this: a campaign of civil disobedience will confront the West German state (and regional states) at the point where it is, alas, *least* Americanized, where older illiberal and antidemocratic traditions are strongest—I mean in the administration of law and order, in the police and the courts. Already in Frankfurt, following a mass demonstration against a new airport runway, the federal state attorney is attempting to establish a legal precedent by which any would-be German Martin Luther King could find himself charged with an offense second in gravity only to high treason. Six years ago, after the kidnapping of Hans-Martin Schleyer, we saw how quickly some West German officials and politicians snapped back into authoritarian law-and-order policies. And the Interior Minister of the day was an outstanding liberal, Gerhart Baum, in a social-liberal government; now the post is held by a right-wing ally of Mr. Strauss, Friedrich Zimmermann, who has seriously suggested that the Greens should not be allowed to take their seats in the Bundestag unless they put on collars and ties. If the state (or individual states) react with a heavy hand to the first German Greenham Common, how long will the popular protest remain nonviolent? How can you wage a "nonviolent civil war"? If, therefore, the Geneva negotiations do not result in postponement of the cruise and Pershing II deployment, there is a serious possibility of bloody civil conflict disturbing the peace of *Kinder, Küche, Kirche* in West Germany this autumn. That is my second cautionary note to Washington—a city which, in the third year of the Reagan Administration, is as good a vantage point as any from which to see that rhetoric alone can't turn back the clock.

TIMOTHY GARTON ASH

Timothy Garton Ash writes about European affairs for *The Spectator*. His book *The Polish Revolution: Solidarity 1980-1982* will be published in Britain by Jonathan Cape in November.

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ANNALS OF EGOTISM

OVERKILL—FRAGMENT I

KUNTA-KENTA-CHAN, our Sino-Smurfian house varlot, deposits my breakfast tray on the desk with singular rudeness. He is upset because for three nights running now I have not continued his instruction in Sanskrit. The man has an insatiable appetite for languages, and is, I must say, a quick study, having milked me of the rudiments of Russian, Lapp, Croatian, and Yiddish. Unfortunately, he has never been able to get the least tongue-hold on English, so it is necessary to tell him in his native Krait that he has once again neglected to remove the raisins from my cereal.

One doesn't like to be let down in small matters like this. It would be idle to explain to Chan that I have been unable to abide even the sight of raisins ever since I was forced to subsist on a diet of nothing else during the last leg of my recent circumnavigation of the world via hang glider. But by the time he has succeeded in extricating the last of the eighteen offenders from his nostrils, he will have grasped my *non raison d'être* well enough.

As I explained to Yahweh last week at lunch (we shared undergraduate digs at Yale for three years and try to get our equally impossible schedules to interface for luncheon at least twice a month—always at the Olympus, on Forty-Seventh Street, but that's an inside joke), life in the fast lane is simply too complex to permit of being gummed up by the little sticky things that plague the daily life of the plebes.

Employing one of the droll metaphors that we use as a sort of scrambler to protect the pith of our post-prandial chit-chat against the auricular incursions of envious eavesdroppers (there may be a palindrome in there somewhere), I told Y that the fabric of the good life—strong, elastic, seamless—is very much like that of a pair of pantyhose; one tiny snag being all that's required to undo a thing of beautiful utility.

DRAWING OF WILLIAM F. BUCKLEY BY DONALD GATES FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

But enough of breakfast reverie—the universe beckons! Today I promised the gang at NASA I'd fly down and spend a few minutes tracking down that inscrutable gremlin in the space shuttle. They've been after it for weeks, to no avail, and are understandably waxing somewhat embarrassed. My guess is that the problem is neither mechanical nor electronic—it's somewhere in the terminology, I'll wager.

I use one of my three direct lines to the garage (one backup simply won't do in these days when the savages are dismembering Ma Bell) to notify another faithful retainer, Old Fitzgerald (his great-grandfather may have been in bond but he is a superb driver), that I want the Bentley at the front door, chop-chop. These daily trips to the airport are a Sisyphusian chore, but they are the price one has to pay in order to spread one's largesse on the otherwise dry toast of what Eddy Wilson (only his mother and I dared that diminutive) called "the Sahara of the American aesthetic." Yet this, too, shall soon pass—even now I can hear the expensive rumble of the contracting crew at work on the heliport my gloriously thoughtful wife is having built as a hard-to-conceal surprise for the tenth anniversary of my stigmata.

Well, as Ron is so fond of saying, I must sign off now. I can, with my Langley-trained hearing, faintly discern the approach of the Bentley. If I'm not quick off the mark, Fitz will indulge in his favorite form of social protest—revving the eight superbly tuned cylinders of the limo. And, as must be clear to everyone in the civilized world by now, I cannot bear a revolution of any sort.

—WILLIAM F. HUBRIS, JR.

William F. Hubris, Jr. is a nom de plume of Joel Wells, an editor at the Thomas More Press.

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A cure for health care? Not from Dr. Reagan.

THE LAISSEZ-FAIRE ELIXIR

BY PAUL STARR

WHEN RONALD REAGAN took office, spokesmen for his Administration advertised their determination to cut the costs of health care by organizing the system on a free-market basis. A few weeks ago, after two years of internal debate, President Reagan finally sent his health program to Congress—a package of bills for changes in Medicare and in the tax treatment of private health insurance. The proposals, particularly the tax changes, are not all bad. But they do not represent the grand design for "health care competition" touted as the conservative answer to the health care muddle. Why the Reagan Administration, like the Carter Administration, shied away from ambitious proposals and opted for incremental reforms is a story with broader ramifications.

To those who follow health care policy at a distance, the perennial talk of skyrocketing costs and the perennial failure of political reform must have a monotonous familiarity. If you turned to another channel after the "health care crisis" was first nationally broadcast around 1970, you can be forgiven for thinking there have been nothing but reruns since. But only the hand-wringing is the same. The numbers, the players, and perhaps most important, the governing ideas, have all significantly changed.

First, the numbers. They seemed scary enough a decade ago: average health care costs had risen from $142 to $334 per person between 1960 and 1970. That was already an increase in the national health bill from $26 billion to $69 billion, up from 5.2 percent to 7.2 percent of gross national product. By 1981 costs reached $1,225 per person. The total bill of $287 billion was 9.8 percent of the G.N.P.—and for 1982 the estimate has jumped to 10.5 percent. In real terms, last year may have been the worst on record for health care inflation. At a time when the consumer price index showed a 3.9 percent increase in prices overall, the health care component was growing by 11 percent, and insurance costs were up 15.7 percent, partially reflecting the 17 percent increase in hospital room rates in 1981.

Back in 1970, rising health care costs were seen as a threat to Americans' personal access to health care. Even some Republicans, including President Nixon, accepted the need for broader public responsibility, and proposed national health insurance in a variety of forms. But by the late 1970s costs were still rising, and were increasingly seen as a threat to the federal budget and the national economy. Today even many liberal Democrats have, for the moment, ruled out national health insurance in any form. Rather than extending coverage, the proposals introduced by the Reagan Administration are aimed at *reducing* the scope of both private and public programs. So although costs continue to go up, the direction of federal policy has been reversed.

In 1970 policymakers agreed that we needed to train more doctors, nurses, and paramedical workers—and, with federal aid, we have done just that. Now the concern is that we may have too many physicians and that the new doctors will push up costs by calling for more hospital care, tests, and operations. In many communities, young physicians no longer start up private practice as a matter of course. Many complete their training heavily in debt and are eager for secure, salaried positions in hospitals, health plans, and group practices. The rising supply of doctors is one reason medical care is moving toward a new pattern of organization.

American medicine has traditionally been organized around physicians in private practice and locally controlled, nonprofit hospitals. Both medical practice and hospitals are now undergoing a process of institutional consolidation. Group practice—up from one out of eight doctors in 1970 to one out of four today—is growing rapidly, in part because it allows physicians to compete more successfully. For example, a group can capture the profits from laboratory tests and other procedures that have been a highly lucrative source of income for hospitals.

Even more striking is the growth of chains and conglomerates of hospitals, nursing homes, and other health care businesses. One out of three hospital beds now belongs to a chain, one out of eight to a profit-making company. The biggest for-profit hospital company ran 23 hospitals in 1970; today it runs over 300, and its revenues exceed $4 billion a year. The federal government actually offers a bonus to hospitals that are run on a profit-making basis. Under Medicare they receive reimbursements that include a return on equity pegged to interest rates; last year, that averaged 19.2 percent. Nonprofit hospitals are not entitled to that extra money.

Like the profit-making hospitals, many nonprofit hospitals also have been merging, reorganizing, and spinning off for-profit subsidiaries. (One nonprofit hospital chain

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actually owns a for-profit chain.) To finance their capital needs, nonprofit hospitals have floated bonds equal in value to one-eighth of the total bond market in the United States, which they have promised to repay on the basis of projected increases in hospital use and hospital charges. Public policy, however, has been struggling to find ways to stop those increases. The bondholders, like the investors in for-profit health care chains, now have a big stake in the failure of federal cost containment.

These structural changes in the health care industry have brought about a new political configuration. From the 1920s to the 1960s, the American Medical Association was the model of a well-organized interest group, effectively vetoing policies it opposed. In the '60s and '70s, the medical schools and hospital associations joined the A.M.A., insurers, and drug companies on the standard list of powerful interest groups in medical affairs. Today health policy is more subject to all kinds of corporate pressure. The nation's large corporations, stung by the growing cost of health insurance, have organized local coalitions and a Washington Business Group on Health to encourage cost control. And the profit-making hospital chains and the investor lobby have waded into the political conflicts over health care.

WITH THESE DEVELOPMENTS, plus the arrival of a conservative Administration, a dramatic ideological shift has taken place. At the start of the last decade, the for-profit hospital companies were generally regarded with suspicion. The ethos of health care continued to emphasize community service, even if the practice did not. Now health care is frankly accepted as a business, and nonprofit institutions are even being urged to become for-profit. Some of the same people who talked about "health care planning" ten years ago now attend seminars on "health care marketing." One hospital administrator says, "Growth and diversification are going to be the name of the game. In any large city, it's going to be survival of the fittest." And this is Sister Irene Kraus talking, president of a Catholic hospital.

The ideological change has clearly influenced conservative policy intellectuals and policymakers. Between the New Deal and the 1960s, conservatives typically endorsed voluntary health insurance and backed the view of the A.M.A. that all private health plans should allow "free choice" of physician and hospital. In many states organized medicine successfully persuaded legislatures to write that view into law—in effect prohibiting health maintenance organizations and other prepaid plans that offer care from specific doctors and facilities. By requiring every plan to offer free choice of doctor and hospital, such laws restricted price competition by health plans using efficient, low-cost providers.

In the early '70s, the conservative buzzword began to change from voluntarism to competition. The first expression of the conservative reappraisal was the Nixon Administration's support of prepaid health plans, renamed health maintenance organizations. The H.M.O. strategy reflected an emerging breach between conservative policymakers and the A.M.A. In the mid-1970s, the Federal Trade Commission also began to go after anticompetitive practices in medical care, such as restrictions on advertising and professional boycotts of prepaid medical plans (see "Doctors' Orders," by Jason DeParle, TNR, December 20, 1982). The H.M.O. and F.T.C. programs, however, were not purely conservative initiatives; they had significant liberal support and actually fared better under Carter than they have under Republican Presidents.

Conservatives also began to support new regulatory programs to control medical costs, including a planning system to review capital investments by hospitals and a peer review program to examine physicians' handling of Medicare and Medicaid cases. By the late 1970s, however, they came to see regulation and competition as antithetical. They pronounced regulation a failure, and decided that competition had to involve more fundamental changes than the H.M.O. program and the antitrust efforts. What was needed, they said, was a new competitive environment in medical care.

IN A SPEECH shortly after the 1980 election, David Stockman described health care as a prime example of the bankruptcy of the "core idea" of liberalism: that social problems "originate in the failure of the private socio-economic order." Now Republicans could demonstrate the success of their own core idea: that the market works. This meant making health care once again an "economic good"—through incentives for consumers, more competition and aggressive marketing by health care plans, and a greater role for profit-making companies—"to bring into play those self-regulatory, economizing, efficiency-producing mechanisms that we rely on in all other sectors."

The new conservative approach has actually underscored the defects of the private insurance system as well as of public programs. Third-party insurance removes the incentive of both physicians and patients to weigh the costs of treatment carefully. Nor do consumers have much incentive to assess the costs of alternative health plans. In many companies, employees have no choice among insurance policies; or, if they do, the company covers the same share of the cost regardless of whether they choose a more or less efficient plan. Many people have no idea what their insurance plan costs; the average worker enjoying health insurance as a fringe benefit pays only one-fifth of the cost out of his paycheck. In addition, the federal tax exemption of employers' contributions to health insurance means that a dollar in (untaxed) benefits is worth more than a dollar in (taxed) wages. So there is an incentive to take earnings in the form of health benefits. Neither in buying insurance nor in buying medical care is cost-conscious behavior much rewarded. And since hospitals have been paid retrospectively on the basis of their costs, they too have had little reason to be cost-conscious.

Two main views have emerged among conservative policy intellectuals about how to address the health care

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crisis. The first, articulated most clearly by Stanford economist Alain Enthoven, emphasizes competing health plans. The second, set forth by Martin Feldstein, now chairman of the Council of Economic Advisers, emphasizes greater "cost-sharing" (higher deductibles and co-payments in insurance plans) to keep down costs.

Enthoven's "consumer choice health plan" was developed originally as a national health insurance option. Enthoven supports multiple choice among competing plans; fixed-dollar subsidies for enrollment and rebates to those who enroll in less expensive plans; a minimum benefit package including basic services to which all would be entitled; the organization of doctors into competing economic units, and for all health plans the same rules covering enrollment procedures, disclosure of information, and premium-setting. Short of national health insurance, this approach calls for companies to offer their employees a choice of competing plans and to make equal dollar contributions toward each option. Enthoven has opposed extensive cost-sharing because, if used by some plans, it distorts comparisons with others, such as H.M.O.s, that put their costs up front in their premiums; and as a result, people expecting to need costly medical services may sign up for the broader coverage of the H.M.O., which then may show higher costs even if it is more efficient.

THE COST-SHARING APPROACH aims to get people to think twice about seeking medical care. Of course, that may stop them from going to the doctor when they need to, but this is the sort of unfortunate side effect economists have learned to live with. The purpose of cost-sharing in a program like Medicare may be entirely defeated by the purchase of private, supplementary insurance—in which case there may be no reduction in the use or true cost of health services, only a reduction in the costs that show up on the government budget.

There is a world of difference between the Enthoven and Feldstein alternatives. Enthoven wants to make consumers price sensitive at the time of selecting health plans. Feldstein seeks to make consumers more price sensitive at the time they are seeking medical care. The Enthoven strategy asks people to compare alternate health plans when they are well, and able to make the best use of available information. The Feldstein approach asks people to make cost-conscious decisions when they or members of their families may be ill and distraught. Critics of policies that rely on market forces in health care rightly object that markets are cold places for people who are sick, vulnerable, and poor, who have little means of making the calculations economists expect of them. Enthoven's approach has been sensitive to some of these objections; Feldstein's has not. By providing basic coverage to the poor and channeling information about alternate health plans through a public agency, Enthoven has tried to protect the interests of the poor and prevent them from being taken advantage of.

But this concern has diminished as conservative ideas have been translated into legislative proposals. The most ambitious attempt to turn Enthoven's ideas into law was the National Health Care Reform Act, introduced by Richard Gephardt, Democrat of Missouri, and David Stockman while he was still a Congressman from Michigan. As a kind of national health insurance bill whose sponsors did not wish it to be known by that name, Gephardt-Stockman provided a health care "contribution" for those who did not receive benefits through employment, but it did not provide the broad financial protection, or the safeguards in the disclosure of health plan information, that Enthoven had called for. The slippage has been even greater in the Administration's proposals, which include no new expenditures at all to protect Americans who are currently uninsured. Somewhere between theory and legislation, the "equity adornments"—to borrow one of Stockman's memorable phrases from the William Greider interview in *The Atlantic*—disappeared.

The Administration also abandoned other crucial elements of the original competition approach. The early legislative proposals introduced, for example, by Senator David Durenberger, Republican of Minnesota, required employers to offer a choice among competing plans, and to provide equal contributions to each, if their health benefits were to qualify for a limited tax exemption. The Administration decided not to attach either of these strings. After all, that would be regulation.

IN THE PROGRAM finally sent to Congress, President Reagan endorsed a cap on tax-exempt employer contributions to health insurance of $2,100 a year for a family and $840 for an individual employee. He also asked that Medicare beneficiaries be allowed to opt out of the government program and to receive a voucher for private insurance instead. Although there are some other market-minded proposals—principally, increased cost-sharing for Medicare—the tax cap and Medicare voucher are really all that come distinctively from the competition strategy. And these have still to be winnowed out by Congress. Even if the tax cap should pass, the compromises made so far have already destroyed the grand design; the fragments of the original plan cannot possibly achieve the original ends.

The Reagan Administration's difficulties in formulating health policy are similar to the trouble it has had in other areas of economic and social policy. A shared free-market rhetoric often conceals real differences. Not only have there been serious divisions among the policy intellectuals in health care (as there have been among monetarists and supply-siders); but the very idea of health care competition, particularly as Enthoven conceived it, was not in the least attractive to much of the health care industry. There has been a contradiction—and this, too, has characterized other areas of policymaking—between the ideological proclivities of conservatives and the pressures of interest groups that make themselves felt in the Republican Party. When the Administration took office, the A.M.A. was already waging a campaign to secure an exemption from the antitrust actions of the F.T.C. The insurance compan-

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ies regarded the procompetition proposals as a potential threat to their business. The Washington Business Group on Health doubted the competition strategy would work, and was put off by the new regulation it would involve, such as requirements that employers offer multiple health plans to their workers.

Most important, the competition strategy did not answer the immediate fiscal concerns of the Administration. The benefits of health care competition are speculative and can be realized only in the long run. The budgetary problems are immediate. Consequently, among the market reforms, those that offered budgetary relief—more cost-sharing in Medicare and capping the tax exemption of employers' contributions to health insurance—received more favorable attention than did measures that would have required new expenditures.

The changes in Medicare illustrate the shift in emphasis. Medicare was not originally a main concern of the advocates of competition; some wanted to bypass it for fear of alarming the elderly. But Medicare costs have been rising nearly 20 percent per year. The advocates of competition have urged "unlocking" beneficiaries to allow them to purchase private insurance. Last year Congress adopted a measure to encourage H.M.O.s to enroll the aged. For each Medicare enrollee, H.M.O.s will receive 95 percent of the "average adjusted per capita cost" of Medicare beneficiaries in their areas. (If they provide care at a lower cost, they keep the difference.) Now the Administration wants to extend the voucher to other private health insurance plans. But it cannot realistically expect major savings from this initiative. Medicare is already administered by the private insurance industry, so the companies have to outperform themselves at a time when government cutbacks are leading hospitals to shift costs from publicly funded patients to privately insured ones.

THE REAL cost-control measures lie elsewhere in the Administration's package. The part of the package most likely to pass Congress is a new system of "prospective payment" for hospitals by "diagnosis-related groups." Instead of paying hospitals on the basis of costs incurred for each service, the government will give them a budget in advance for their Medicare cases, with payment adjusted by diagnosis. Under this system, hospitals that provide treatment at lower-than-average cost per case will benefit, while hospitals with lavish patterns of practice will lose money on their Medicare patients.

Prospective payment is not a peculiarly "procompetitive" reform; in some ways it resembles the Carter Administration's effort to force hospitals to operate within budget ceilings. But because it is limited to Medicare beneficiaries, Reagan's proposal for prospective payment will have limited impact. Hospitals will still be able to shift costs to other patients covered by private insurance. Previous experience suggests that they will do exactly that. Payment by case also does nothing to curtail unnecessary admissions to hospitals. It creates new incentives, moreover, to manipulate a hospital's caseload and its diagnostic records. Yet the Administration persists in its desire to eliminate government-financed review of hospital use under Medicare and Medicaid. In addition, Medicare payments to hospitals will be adjusted according to their capital costs. Since hospitals will be able to "pass through" the costs of new capital investment, the prospective payment program will not deter hugely expensive plans for hospital expansion. Nonetheless, the Administration wants to do away with planning agencies that review capital investment.

THE ONE PART of the program that can be counted on to cut Medicare costs is the proposed increase in cost-sharing. The cost-sharing provisions have been somewhat obscured by the Administration's addition of catastrophic coverage to beneficiaries who are hospitalized more than sixty days in a year; but this is more than offset by higher charges in the earlier stages of hospitalization. The net result will be an increase of 80 percent in the cost to the elderly of an average hospital stay.

The Administration has a far better case for its plan to cap the tax exemption of employers' contributions to health insurance. The tax subsidy to private insurance now costs the government nearly $30 billion per year, making it the second largest federal health program after Medicare. Yet its benefits go predominantly to the middle and upper classes. According to a study last year by the Congressional Budget Office, the tax exemption yields $622 in benefits to the average family earning more than $50,000 annually, but it yields only $83 to the average family with an income between $10,000 and $15,000 a year. The exemption provides nothing, of course, to those who must pay individually for insurance or who have no insurance coverage at all.

The Administration is not proposing to eliminate the tax subsidy, only to cut it about 10 percent. At a time when the federal government has cut back programs that benefit the aged and the poor, it seems eminently fair to cut back a program whose benefits are sharply skewed to upper income groups. Nevertheless labor unions whose members enjoy the tax subsidy are now offering strong opposition to the tax cap. Labor's defense resembles the successful effort by restaurant workers to defend the full tax deductibility of businessmen's lunches. In both cases, labor has gone to bat for higher income groups, defending exactly the kind of "trickle-down" benefit that it deplores in conservative economic policies.

It is true that the tax cap will affect some workers in high cost areas as well as high income people with generous health benefits. It may also encourage more cost-sharing to keep the costs of employer-paid premiums below the ceiling for tax exemption. But the benefits of the cap outweigh these disadvantages. Some have urged adjusting the cap for regional variations in health costs, but the tax code does not make regional adjustments for differences in the cost of living. The code has enough complexity; it would be a mistake to introduce more.

As health policy, the tax cap has lost much of its poten-

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tial value because of compromises made within the Administration. Stripped of the provisions requiring employers to offer multiple choice and equal contributions to health plans, the tax cap will little affect competition in health care. It may have some marginal impact on discouraging expensive additions to health plans, such as coverage for dental and psychiatric services. But employees who find their taxable income on their W-2 higher than their wages seem unlikely to ask for a rollback in their health benefits. Any effect on health insurance will be slow and modest.

The tax cap ought to be defended primarily because it is progressive tax policy and will help to broaden the income tax base after a period of steady erosion (caused by both legislated loopholes and the disproportionate growth of untaxed fringe benefits). But after all the regressive tax changes made by this Administration, many liberals will have difficulty believing that this one is progressive.

The opposition to the tax cap is broad, but not necessarily decisive. At a luncheon in January, opponents of the cap were able to draw representatives from some 55 organizations, including chambers of commerce, commercial insurance companies, Blue Cross, the A.F.L-C.I.O., and the National Council of Senior Citizens. Senator Bob Packwood, Republican of Oregon, said it was virtually a victory celebration because there was "no constituency" for the tax cap. However, while policies that cost money need constituencies outside the government, policies that raise revenues have a constituency in government itself. The reformed budget reconciliation process has made it easier for Congress to adopt legislative packages whose elements might formerly have been blocked by interest-group pressures.

LIBERALS OUGHT to respond to the Administration's proposal of the tax cap as an opportunity for a promising compromise. The revenues that the cap generates might be earmarked for a number of purposes—among them, a program of health insurance for the unemployed. Senator Bob Dole, chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, has expressed an interest in using the revenues for this purpose.

A program for the unemployed would be popular and would meet an urgent need. Although there are no firm statistics, the Congressional Budget Office estimates that about eleven million Americans have no health insurance coverage as a result of unemployment. Their difficulties are widely acknowledged as one of the tragic problems of the current recession. Health insurance benefits could be provided through the existing system of unemployment offices, and responsibly financed out of the tax cap's revenues if the ceiling for the cap is dropped somewhat lower than the level in the Administration's proposal. The program would be paid for by those who are working, but they would be paying not only for their brothers and sisters out of work but also for themselves, in the event they lose their jobs and insurance coverage.

The real objection, of course, is that such a program does not go far enough. Twenty to thirty million Americans—no one knows exactly how many—lack health insurance, public or private. In the current climate, a comprehensive insurance program obviously has little chance. But in the name of what is better, we should not refrain from doing what is good.

A comprehensive program must also be a program to control health care costs. Nearly all the advanced industrial countries provide national health coverage, we do not, and yet we spend more of our national income on health than do almost all of them. Within the United States, H.M.O.s also show that it is possible to provide services of a high quality at significantly lower cost. These comparisons suggest that the demands of equity and cost control can be better reconciled than they are under our current system. But to achieve the economies that are possible and necessary requires substantial institutional change. The Reagan Administration has not been up to that.

THE CONSERVATIVES seem to be leaving the long-run problems of health care to future Administrations. They have failed to demonstrate that they can even assemble a consensus for a serious program, let alone make it work. Budgetary priorities have crushed whatever creative possibilities the health care competition strategy might have had. Although the Kemp-Roth tax cut was partially intended to create budgetary pressure to curb liberal spending programs, it has ironically also reduced the latitude for conservative policy innovation.

Oddly enough, if a competitive strategy such as Enthoven's is ever to be adopted, it will probably have a better chance under a Democratic Administration. The Democrats are not as closely tied to the A.M.A. and the insurance companies, and they may be more willing to undertake the effort needed to extend a system of health insurance to the whole population and to finance the start-up of competitive health plans. The current evolution of the health care industry, however, is making it more difficult for liberals to support a health system based on H.M.O.s. Many of the nonprofit H.M.O.s that were started in the early '70s with federal financing are now being converted to for-profit ownership and combined into larger national companies. Many liberals who favored H.M.O.s—particularly with consumer participation in their control—now find their development considerably less palatable. As in the development of hospital chains, the removal of control to a higher level of corporate management may weaken both professional and community influence over health services. Although professionalism has been a means of acquiring social privileges, it has also encouraged a genuine sense of moral responsibility and commitment to work. A corporate health system may undermine these values. It is also unlikely to display much interest in serving unprofitable communities and unprofitable people. Future public financing of health care may require more public organization to make services locally accountable and accessible to all.

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STANLEY KAUFFMANN ON FILMS

After Laughter

It's time to take Monty Python seriously. This may sound ungratefully grim, but these six men have brought it on themselves. They have been heading toward serious consideration ever since their first film, *And Now for Something Completely Different* (drawn from their first five years' work on BBC-TV); they pressed onward with their medieval mockery, *Monty Python and the Holy Grail*; and they virtually sealed their fate as important figures with their finespun pietistic satire, *Monty Python's Life of Brian*. Now, after two feature-length collections of live-performance tapes, which contained some of their best recent TV work and some sketches that would frizzle TV tubes, comes *Monty Python's The Meaning of Life*—and they are doomed. They must be called significant comic artists. I can't add "of the first rank" because there's no one else in their particular rank: they are unique.

Monty Python's The Meaning of Life
(Universal Pictures)

The Meaning of Life is not their most consistently funny film, but it's the one that is most free in fantasy and most savage, with the special MP savagery that blends humane rage with cruel means, under the license of comedy. (The copiously illustrated screenplay has just been published by Grove Press, with, inevitably, some slight differences from the finished film.) This is true even though the picture begins rather weakly, with a ten-minute "short," separately titled, which has only a few engaging visual effects and comic ideas. (A partial reprise of the "short," from a different view, later in the "feature" doesn't greatly redeem it.) But then *The Meaning of Life* itself begins, and it quickly does much more than allay our fears.

It's not a continuous story: there are sections, so labeled, going from birth to death, containing discrete bits of material about the section subjects. I suppose the material must be called sketches, but the term isn't always quite right. Many of them *are* Monty Python sketches, well up to their lunatic mark; but some of the material, though it has sketch shape and tone, pushes beyond.

At the middle of the film—which, too, is labeled—Michael Palin sits at the side of the screen as a refayned TV hostess. (Yes, that's the gender. In customary MP style, many of the women are played by them. Palin here is dressed and coiffured and sounds like a lady-in-waiting to H.R.H.) The hostess announces an interlude. At the end of the film, again so labeled, the hostess again appears. She opens a large envelope that contains the meaning of life, and she reads off a message that begins with sound advice but flies off into audience abuse.

Out of the plentiful sketches, here are two samples. In the section called "Growth and Learning," John Cleese is a schoolmaster. The others of the group and some other men, dressed in British schoolboy garb, are his students. Cleese, a martinet, behaves as if he were drilling a dull Latin lesson into these bored sullen kids, but the subject is in fact sexual intercourse. (Teacher, bullying: . . . "No doubt you can tell me what the purpose of foreplay is . . . Biggs." Biggs rises reluctantly and looks at chums for help: "Don't know, sorry, sir.") Cleese pushes a button that lets down a huge bed; his wife comes in and strips; and they engage in sex before the class. Cleese didactically describes every move to the apathetic boys and has to reprove them for inattention.

In a section called "The Third World," which turns out to be Yorkshire, Michael Palin, as a weary factory hand, comes home to face his saggy wife, Terry Jones, and their small army of kids, from infants to teenagers, and reports that the mill is closed. "We're destitute." He's going to have to sell the children for scientific experiment. When they protest, he says, "Blame the Catholic Church for not letting me wear one of those little rubber things." He then breaks into a song with the lines "Every sperm is sacred, every sperm is great," and the picture explodes into a gigantic musical number, through backyards and streets, with dancing kids and clergy and nurses and neighbors, with crane shots and cute cuts, in punitive parody of the heartwarming orphanage numbers in *Annie*.

The jabs are so sharp that I began to remember the old saw about anti-Catholicism being the anti-Semitism of liberals. Just then, the number ends, and we cross the street to a stuffy parlor with a stuffy middle-aged couple. The husband deplores the Catholic fecundity across the street. He can wear a rubber sheath, he says, and keep his wife from being impregnated. "That's what being a Protestant is all about." He can even wear French Ticklers if he likes. He can walk into a shop, with his head held high, and say, "Harry, I want you to sell me a condom. In fact today I think I'll have a French Tickler, for I am a Protestant. . . ." (And later on the punch line of a song jabs the Jews. Nobody gets off unjostled.)

But in some highly imaginative ways,

FILMS WORTH SEEING

Betrayal. Exquisite acting and directing give Harold Pinter's well-written but minor play more depth than it had on stage.

Parsifal. H. J. Syberberg has used Wagner's (complete) score as stimulus for his teeming symbolic imagination and historical fantasies.

Local Hero. An American oil executive in a Scottish fishing village runs into romance, more in the generic than the amorous sense. Very pleasant.

Tender Mercies. Texas. A former country singing star, who hit alcoholic bottom, comes back as far as he wants to. Horton Foote's script, if a bit tidy, is a moving spiritual inquiry. Beautiful work by Robert Duvall and the director Bruce Beresford.

SK

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the film goes past the usual Monty Python form, the anthology of sketches. Some sequences flow from an initial sketch into a shape that resembles a musical fantasia on a theme. For example, in the "Death" section, the Grim Reaper, complete with cowl and scythe, arrives at a posh cottage. The sequence continues through a sharp sketch in which he announces their doom to hosts and guests, then the Grim Reaper conducts them all to heaven, which turns out to be a lush, crowded, Caribbean-type hotel with a huge cocktail lounge in which Eric Idle, wearing ascot and brocade jacket, is seated at a piano accompanying himself as he sings, in clipped Coward accents, a clipped Coward song about his penis. Is it possible that heaven is hell?

AND THE CONTENTS of some sketches, even when they are rounded-off in shape, go past the funny into the disquieting, then keep going. And going. One such is in a luxe restaurant with John Cleese as the Frenchified headwaiter. In comes the fattest person ever constructed for play or film, Terry Jones in a blimp-size dinner jacket. As the headwaiter fusses over him, the man announces that he is going to be sick, a bucket is provided, and he continues to be sick and sick and sick as the headwaiter keeps his aplomb, as an immense meal with oceans of drink is ordered and served. If the sicking-up has any humor at all, it's soon over. But grant, as I readily do, that we are dealing here with some of the wittiest men alive, and you must also grant that they know the scene has quickly ceased to be funny, that they are not interested here in being funny. Clearly they want to burn through the joke and look back at it. Satire on grossness, on the need of a rich man to cram his money down his gullet in food form, on the thin servilities of a headwaiter pretending affection for a guest—these patent targets are left behind as the scene tears past the possibility of laughter into disgust and anger. The same is true of another sketch about a company that deals in liver transplants.

Most social satire is by now contained cozily within the society it satirizes. Instead of scathing, it flatters—by testing and proving the broadmindedness of the audience. "The hell with that," or something ruder, imply the Monty Python crew in these sketches, as they push into the intolerable. Some of the audience at the press screening thought these scenes tasteless, failed humor. I thought them differently intended and entirely successful. They make the purported frankness of Woody Allen's *Everything You Always Wanted to Know About Sex but Were Afraid to Ask* look like japery at an adult summer camp. They make the so-called anarchism of Buñuel's *The Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoisie* look discreet and charming. The Monty Python people are telling us that, in the Great Contest of Life, neatness does not count. They have set foot on Blake's road of excess, hoping that the old man was right, that it will lead to the palace of wisdom.

Terry Jones, who directs, can no longer be called the member of the group who directs, as if he were the goodhearted sucker who is willing to do the dirty work for the group. His eye, his rhythmic sense, his instinct for attention—where to be looking at every moment—show him to be a genuinely able director in his own right. He and his five fellows are flawless performers, with uncannily precise ears and versatility. As devisers and writers, they are breathtakingly ingenious—most of the time, anyway. I can think of no other filmmakers, from the gravest to the giddiest, whose future work I anticipate more eagerly. They are the most dangerous madmen at large, ruthlessly perceptive and torrentially gifted, who are angry at everything improvable in human behavior that is not being improved. On the basis of this new film, I'd guess that their anger is beginning to include their own work and its success.

ROBERT BRUSTEIN ON THEATER

English Gardens, American Frontiers

There is a piece of folklore about an American tourist who, upon visiting the formal gardens of an English country estate and inquiring after the secret of their soft, lush, weedless symmetry, was politely instructed: "Mow the grass for four hundred years." A similar air of condescension surrounds a particular species of English drama, which by this time has become almost as stately and carefully manicured as its horticultural counterpart—almost as cloistered and artificial too, though it never fails to awe American visitors.

Quartermaine'sTerms
by Simon Gray

Buck
by Ronald Ribman

The latest example of the garden play to extend its tendrils overseas is Simon Gray's *Quartermaine's Terms*, now transplanted to Playhouse 91 in a Long Wharf Theater windowbox. Enter this world and leave time behind. The period is the 1960s, but you won't learn this from any contemporary allusions, aside from one passing reference to the fact that women writers are being published more often these days. We might be at the Haymarket in the 1940s, watching a play by Terence Rattigan or Frederick Lonsdale, for Mr. Gray derives from these genteel playsmiths not only an apparent indifference to life beyond the drawing room or common room, but also his clipped style and airless subject matter. How long since you've been asked to sympathize with the professional and personal disappointments of English schoolteachers in the provinces? About as long, I bet, as since you last shared in the tribulations of the guests in boardinghouses and seaside resorts—the other compelling concerns of the English garden set. The setting for *Quartermaine's Terms* is the staff room of a school in Cambridge that teaches English to foreigners. In this production, it is beige, and so are most of the characters. Each has been provided with a touching domestic story, which the playwright unravels gradually after the obligatory introductions ("Hello, Anita." "Hello, St. John." "I say, you look different."). It is a tasteful evening—with the flavor and firmness of crustless toast dipped in yesterday's tea.

A few passing references to Chekhov and Ibsen in the course of the play (the hero isn't sure whether he is to see *Un-*

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cle Vanya or *The Cherry Orchard* or *Hedda Gabler* at the local theater), along with the fact that the plot advances primarily between the scene breaks, suggest that Mr. Gray aspires to a Great Tradition, but his common room or garden variety characters don't really have enough depth or nerve to invite sustained comparisons. One of these characters is tied to her cranky invalid mother and wishes she would die; another is a failed novelist with a faltering marriage; another is forbidden by her philandering husband to have children, but gets pregnant anyway; another is suffering through the nervous breakdown of his daughter; still another is frustrated in his ambitions to become a permanent member of the teaching staff; *und so weiter*.

St. John Quartermaine, the eponymous hero, spends the term of the play (three years) sitting in the same chair dozing or staring vacantly at the audience or murmuring, "Oh, I say." Because he is absent-minded, he sometimes forgets to go to class, and there are complaints from the students about his teaching ability. Moreover, while all his colleagues apparently like him, nobody seems to want to join him at *Hedda Gabler* (or *Uncle Vanya* or *The Cherry Orchard*); and he is never invited anywhere until the penultimate scene when everybody invites him simultaneously. When the school principal dies (between the scenes, of course), the new headmaster sacks him. St. John, having lost the only family he has, is left alone on stage to murmur "Oh lord—well, I say—oh Lord."

This poignant contrivance is acted in a manner that is inevitably called "impeccable"—which translated into English for foreigners usually refers to the simulated accents. The actors are accomplished American performers, but lacking a firm purchase on this slick ice, all they can do is skate along the surface. Looking like an immaculate giraffe, Remak Ramsey's St. John is sung rather than performed in a vibrating manner that occasionally breaks into a bark. As for Mr. Gray, who used to have some bite when he followed the school of Pinter (rather than Chekhov), he has here produced a play that is not only toothless but gumless. *Quartermaine's Terms* stands in serious need of periodontal surgery.

BY CONTRAST, Ronald Ribman's new play, *Buck*, is clumsy and sprawling and confused, and it's receiving a production at the American Place Theater (in collaboration with Playwrights Horizons) which is far from "impeccable." But at least *Buck* has got some roughhouse energy and surreal poetry, and owes its failures to large ambitions rather than to a surplus of timidity or gentility. Ribman couldn't mow a neat lawn if he wanted to; his work is full of crabgrass and thistles and bald spots; but he's a frontier buster, one with the ambition and courage to crash into the wilderness if necessary in order to break through the limits of artifice and convention.

Buck takes place in a grubby television studio in the bowels of an abandoned garage: John Arnone's setting features dank columns and an ominous automobile elevator which, signaling its movement with scary clanging bells, connects with the executive offices of a disreputable entertainment company. This company underwrites a cable show called "Reenactments," a show conceived by its producer, Buck Halloran, after he once fantasized about killing his ex-wife and her present husband, and recreating the murders on TV. Currently, "Reenactments" exploits New York's netherworld through theatrical reconstructions of the sleaziest crimes of the day. But while Buck's employers are after the most sensational possible treatment of the material, Buck has an artist's longing to represent the truth. His effort to investigate the reality behind the murder of a lonely female pickup by a mild-mannered pipe-smoking professor represents the only thread of plot.

While Buck tries to determine the facts behind this particular murder, he is at the same time rehearsing and taping other recent crimes: the slaughter of a French Ambassador by his servant, a Central American revolutionary who afterward served his remains to the Ambassador's wife baked in a pâté; the murder of an aging vagrant by a beserk Puerto Rican. Since some of the participants are off the street, and can't tell the difference between what they're acting and what is real, this material offers juicy Pirandellian opportunities that Ribman only occasionally grasps. More often, he is moralizing about the media and fashioning a melodramatic confrontation between the "creative" department and the venal management. In the most striking, most Ribmanesque scene of the play, Buck is menaced by two corporate criminal bosses—one a Jew who announces his murderous intentions by reciting Biblical prayers for the dead, the other a black whose huge club foot mysteriously returns to normal between the acts—both of whom engage in a weird foot wrestle with Buck on top of a table, before telling him to throw out the more truthful murder-scene and shoot the lies he wrote last week.

Buck yells after them: "You can't pretend that the agony of the world doesn't matter"—which is typical of the liberal tendentiousness that keeps intruding on Ribman's best surrealist moments. So is an irrelevant subplot concerning Buck's troubles with his former wife ("He is my son and I love him and they won't let me see him"), which sometimes leaves the play soaking in the damp soil of *Kramer vs. Kramer*dom. As a matter of fact, *Buck* is still one or two drafts away from a coherent theatrical piece, because Ribman has not yet found for it a consistent theme, or style, or point of view. As a result, the play lurches wildly from film noir to Pirandellian theatricality to domestic senti-

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ment to media satire to surreal nightmare, without ever finding a congenial place to rest.

The production is even more confused about its purpose, though some of the acting—particularly Priscilla Lopez as the murdered girl—is strong. Ribman writes dream plays for the 1980s; Elinor Renfield has directed a show for the 1950s, limited to shrill Studio naturalism and strained psychological intensity. Alan Rosenberg, for example, is a talented actor, but he plays Buck as if he were Philip Marlowe with a hangover, unshaven, hunched, wearing the obligatory trenchcoat and high-heeled boots, with a cigarette dangling from his lips. Ribman requires fast reversals and chameleon moods, but most of these actors are capable of playing only a single intention. Still, this strange, flawed play represents a genuine effort to connect with our time in all its aimless, inchoate confusion. Therefore it is, after David Mamet's *Edmond*, the most courageous new American work thus far this season, and further evidence of the fact that, if we can't grow gardens very well, we are still capable of exploring the dark woods.

A Demonological Fiction

The Little Drummer Girl by John Le Carré

(Knopf, 430 pp., $10.95)

John Le Carré's thrillers have conveyed, as few others, the urgency of the struggle waged between East and West, between totalitarianism and democracy. The struggle is openly about human values, and its outcome will affect the lives of virtually everyone. Some aspects of it nevertheless are largely invisible, or at least concealed from public inspection, and it is upon them that Le Carré has focused. In order to depict the East-West struggle in fictional terms, he has blurred its moral outlines, to show that both sides use comparable means to advance their very different ends. The intensity and drive of his thrillers have derived from the ambiguity at their center, whereby good men often do evil for reasons of state.

The Little Drummer Girl is constructed upon the fraught issue of the Palestinians and the Israelis, a microcosm of the East-West struggle, to be sure, but more importantly a historical issue in its own right. The famous seductions of Le Carré's fiction, however, are not the whole story. For all the twists and turns of his plot, and the ironies and complexities of his character portraiture, this novel is about a current flesh-and-blood conflict. Here, one might have thought, is an ideal subject for moral ambiguity. Le Carré finds it clear-cut. To him, the Palestinians are good, the Israelis bad. Such tension as there is springs only from the presentation of the good as unfortunately weak, and the bad as unnaturally strong.

In this novel, the Israelis have become committed to sweeping away the whole pack of Palestinian men, women, and children. Israeli murderous intentions are posited time and again. "Nervous politicians and war-hungry generals" are accused of making the killing of innocent Palestinians the habitual practice of the armed forces. In the novel's foreground are the first-line killers, members of the Israeli secret service, repulsive characters one and all. Neither universal morality nor the laws of their country act as the slightest restraint upon their urge to power and domination, for the greater glory of Israel. Their funds are apparently unlimited, so that their corruption ramifies through one society after another.

Kurtz is the leader of the team, Kurtz of the short fuse, "lacking the elitist background of the kibbutzim," but one who "wheeled and dealed and lied even in his prayers." He is possessed by "a deep and awesome hatred" that later evolves into "the glint of hatred in his dark Slav eyes." His assistant, Shimon Litvak, a white-faced fanatic, "hated inefficiency as much as he hated the enemy who was guilty of it." He has "Bible-black eyes," and in them "rabbinical anger," whatever that may mean or imply. Oded, also on the team, has eyes "darkened with hatred" at the sight of Salim, a captured Palestinian terrorist, and becomes ill and gray from the tension of keeping him alive. In fact Salim is subjected to prolonged psychological torture and deception before being horribly done to death. Not even the girls on the secret service team, Rachel and Rose, show the least squeamishness. Only two Israelis in the novels are recognizably human, Professor Minkel, an elderly left-winger who lectures about Palestinian rights, and his wife. "We couldn't stop the Nazis," Mrs. Minkel says, "now we can't stop ourselves."

The team is completed by Gadi Becker, with "his Semitic looks . . . his look of being the chosen one to the detriment of others not so favoured." When asked how many Arabs he has killed, this chosen one simply replies "Enough." In the Yom Kippur War he fought in the place where it really mattered, behind the Syrian lines. The man's powers of disguise, his self-control and ruthlessness, are so sinister that Le Carré appropriately introduces into his portrait a reference to Mephistopheles. To every Israeli who knows of

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A BLESSING FROM TEXAS

It's a usual day in Houston,
dank on the delta floor and hot.
I watch the clouds conflate, tuft on
tuft and curd on curd—the city of God
conducting its business without us,
our longing, our cumulus of pride
and heartbreak, our eloquent soliloquies
about being lonely, each of us,

as a cloud. This is a notion the Gulf-
bound clouds ceremoniously leaving Houston
would find ludicrous, if they didn't spend
their massed senses of humor imitating
the long, slow dumb show of matter—
here a pig, there a juniper, and there
a lobster with a broken claw.
And out to sea they ceaselessly go.

Though change is no religion to them,
for religion lives by lack. Think how a great
love too readily met can slacken itself
in such swift happiness and never break
through to the pain that breaks us to make
us whole, to a distillate maturity,
like an herb's, more piercingly exact
for having such a long, hard time

of itself. Off Galveston they're blessing
the shrimp fleet today, sprinkling holy
water onto the waters. I'd bless you
if you were here, my love, and instead
I wave my firm hand at the disappearing
clouds. Go, I could be wishing them,
and look, they go. This magic is easy.
Who's blessing the shrimp? Oh, the British

bless the fox before the hunt, but that's
no blessing, it's an exculpation,
like the phone call the jilter makes
to see if the jiltee is all right, please.
To bless is to wound and to sever
(those slashes the Bishop of Galveston
makes in the unresisting air are a cross
because we know they are a cross).

God love you, we say when we won't.
Did I say my hand was firm? I lied.
To bless is also to relax one's hand.
Clouds scull overhead. Shrimpers bob
out onto the Gulf. If I turn my palms
down, will your absence fall away?
That's why we call them lifelines.
If this be choice, I take it. Bless, bless.

WILLIAM MATTHEWS

him, however, he is a hero.

The team's task is to eliminate an outstandingly successful Palestinian terrorist network. In order to break the terrorists' security and reach their leader Khalil, elder brother of the murdered Salim, Kurtz selects an English girl, Charlie, as a decoy. Charlie is a young fringe actress, with generous and innocent left-wing instincts. Little could she suspect that she would be so vilely exploited, that her life would be so wantonly endangered on account of Israel.

Gadi's careful seduction of this girl is in fact a kidnap. Trying to soothe her in front of his team, Kurtz reveals his devious purposes, whereupon she blurts out, "You going to put the electrodes on me?" She wants the Israelis, in her own words, to leave the poor bloody Arabs alone. "Stop bombing their camps. Driving them off their land. Bulldozing their villages. Torturing them." Le Carré elaborates, "She had a decent vision, when it was allowed her, of a Palestine restored to those who had been hounded from it in order to make way for more powerful European custodians."

In spite of these views, Charlie allows herself to be recruited, all for love of Gadi, a love at first sight for a stranger (which for some reason does not prevent her, on closer acquaintance, from calling him "a bloodthirsty landgrabbing little Jew"). For his sake, apparently, she enters into a complicated pretense of having been the girl friend of the murdered Salim. A false identity is concocted. She carries the deception through. She duly penetrates the Palestinian network, is accepted, travels to Lebanon, where she receives training and is bombed by the ubiquitous genocidal aircraft. Another irony: Charlie, the secret Zionist agent, looks up at these Israeli aircraft and explodes on behalf of Palestinians, "You rotten killing bastards. If I hadn't been here, you'd have bombed them to Kingdom Come."

In contrast to the Israelis, the Palestinians are motivated by love. "I kill only for love, I kill for Palestine and her children," Khalil declares, "The Zionists kill for fear and for hate." Fatmeh, his sister, spends her time swabbing babies' eyes in a clinic. The refugee father of the family died of despair.

> He asked to be buried in Hebron—in El Khalil—so they took him to the Allenby bridge. The Zionists wouldn't let him cross. So Michel [nom de guerre for Salim] and Fatmeh and two friends carried the coffin up a high hill, and when evening came they dug a grave at a place where he could look across the border into the land the Zionists stole from him.

Another brother, Fawaz, a lawyer, had been gunned down without pretext by the Zionists, as he came out of a house one morning.

Young Kareem, a Palestinian fighter, has a sister killed in a Zionist air attack, and a brother killed in a naval bombardment. Kareem wants to return to Jerusalem only in order to study, but thinks he will die first: "The Zionists will genocide us to death." His friend Yasir, "a big Communist," is an exception in that he feels hatred, an elevated hatred: he aims to destroy colonialism everywhere in the world. Selma, whose mother has been killed by the Israeli aircraft, takes Charlie dancing and singing with the masses, and ironing children's shirts for a parade in honor of Yasir Arafat. "In the camp, Charlie experienced at last the sympathy that life till now had denied her. Waiting, she joined the ranks of those who had waited all their lives. Sharing their captivity, she dreamed that she had extricated

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herself from her own." Fashionably liberationist and left-wing as these sentiments are, Charlie nonetheless carries her deception through to the end, making love to Khalil in the certain knowledge that she is thereby betraying him to his death. Gadi bursts in on the bedroom scene to spatter her with Palestinian blood.

Involvement with Charlie has stirred Gadi's conscience, and he may therefore be redeemable. Gadi has been to see for himself the village where Khalil and his family came from; he had sensed in Hebron "the explosive quiet and smouldering dark glances of the occupied"; and he had paused in thought at a spot where "a huge Israeli settlement stood like the emissary of some conquering planet." Pursuing Charlie, he gives her back "the identity he had stolen from her"—a miniature, presumably, for the larger redemption to be made by returning stolen land to the Palestinians. Perhaps the two of them will live happily ever after. But not in Israel. "What are we to become?" Gadi finally wonders of his country, "A Jewish homeland or an ugly little Spartan state?" In Gadi's crisis of conscience, as in Charlie's devotion to him, Le Carré makes gestures at depicting a more ambiguous image of Israel.

But his heart clearly is not in the effort. The willing submission of Charlie to Kurtz and Gadi is an implausibility so enormous and so central that the story collapses under it. Love is all very well, but she is risking her life every day on behalf of Israelis whom she scarcely knows, who treat her abominably, and whom she thinks wrong and wicked, in order to damage Palestinians whom she admires without reserve. Her motivation is incoherent. Manipulated in this incredible manner, she is that very old figment indeed, the nice Gentile girl who has fallen into the hands of secretive and scheming Jews who will stop at nothing.

The implausibility serves a purpose for Le Carré, however, for it allows him to express the most extreme anti-Israel passions through the mouth of a character ostensibly working for Israel. When Charlie screams that the Israelis are fascists and rotten killing bastards, these obscenities can appear to be wished upon her by exigencies of plot. Such is not the case, however. Here is a matter, which for all its twists of narrative, belongs to the dimension of agitprop. It is wretched. It is also childish in its sentimental personifications of good and evil. To reduce the complex Arab-Israeli encounter, with its weight of suffering, to this pictorial simplicity, is to ignore its history and its contemporary reality. To select some ideals for praise, or some guilts for blame, at the expense of all other ideals and guilts, is not an act of imagination, but a lie.

Israelis and Jews everywhere have become accustomed to such lying, new in form since 1967, to be sure, but very familiar indeed in substance. The primary explanation for the development of lying about Israel is political, and dates from the Six Day War. Up to 1967 the Israelis had been perceived as victims of manifold injustices, immediately threatened by Arabs whose own evident claims to justice were to some degree vitiated by an absolute refusal to compromise, and by their blood lust. The 1967 war in itself did not affect the historic rights and wrongs of the Arab-Israeli dispute, nor the basic geopolitical factors, except that Israel was left in sudden and unexpected possession of the West Bank and Gaza. Yet in many eyes, Arabs were instantly established as victims of manifold injustices, and Israelis as bloodthirsty conquerors refusing to compromise. Here was a reversal of opinion and emotion of the kind described by George Orwell in *1984*. In the campaign of vilification, it became an automatic reflex to blacken Israel as Nazi.

Le Carré's opinion of Israel—his par-

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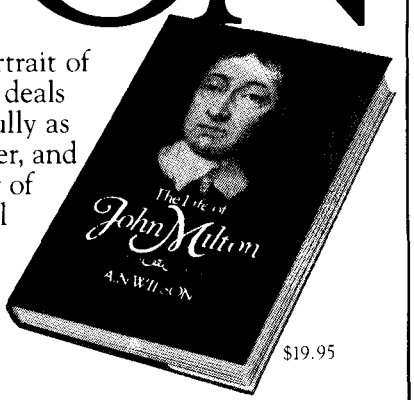

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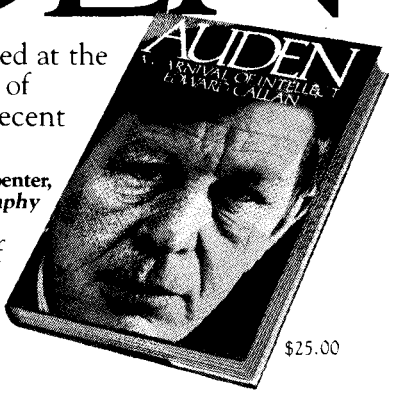

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ticipation in this campaign against it—is a matter of record. In *The Observer* of June 13, 1982, he laid the foundation for a comparison between Israelis and Nazis. The Israeli invasion of Lebanon, he wrote, was "a monstrosity, launched on speciously assembled grounds." Too many Israelis, he went on,

> have persuaded themselves that every Palestinian man and woman and child is by definition a military target, and that Israel will not be safe until the pack of them are swept away. It is the most savage irony that Begin and his generals cannot see how close they are to inflicting upon another people the disgraceful criteria once inflicted upon themselves.

Generally speaking, people of independent mind can acquire adequate information to measure agitprop against what actually happens in the Middle East. Lies and distortions, even in newspapers or on television, are open to correction. But *The Little Drummer Girl* matters very much indeed, because in it the contemporary image of Israel as an unutterable, indeed Nazi, evil is crystallized, and this portrait will go round the world with the authority of a best seller. Statements in fiction are immune to the truths of real life. A novel lives in the imagination, after all, and it is there, for the credulous, that the image of an evil Israel will be fired and sustained. And an imagination like Le Carré's, when out of control, is a thing that will impress those who want to believe in a demonological vision, or perhaps cannot judge it for themselves, and it will scarify a good many others.

Palestinians, needless to say, are not responsible for those who claim to be their saviors. They have not only had to deal with unwelcome Soviet sponsorship, but with the more confusing threat of the tens of thousands of Western supporters who have swarmed upon them since 1967, also believing for a variety of reasons that Israel is uniquely evil. But the Palestinians have seen for themselves why and how Jews arrived in their midst, not in the least as "powerful European custodians" but as pitiful survivors from a real genocide. It has not been the failure to kill more Jews that has aroused their bitterness, but the failure to make peace. Even in P.L.O. circles, they know that they and the Israelis have been inexorably trapped in the same history: that is the nature of the tragedy.

But now an author of renown and standing comes to inform the Palestinians that they have been wrong in these perceptions. They are to understand instead that they have been selected for premeditated assault by a people too powerful to be defended, but so inherently evil that peace cannot be made with them. Incited to become aggressive, they also find themselves patronized for being helpless. If Le Carré's view is correct, then the Palestinians have nothing to live for, since whatever they do in these frightening circumstances, the Jews will still be the death of them. Real enemies are not so harmful and demoralizing as friends like these.

DAVID PRYCE-JONES

David Pryce-Jones is the author of *The Face of Defeat: Palestinian Refugees and Guerrillas* (Holt, Rinehart & Winston), a history of the Palestinian Arabs.

AN ORGANIC INTELLECTUAL

The World, The Text, and The Critic by Edward W. Said

(Harvard University Press, 327 pp., $20)

Edward W. Said's new book is a selection of the essays he has published during the past thirteen or fourteen years. They are prefaced by a long essay in praise of "secular criticism"; and followed by a short one, three dismissive pages, on "religious criticism," a matter to which he contributes only his contempt. "Once an intellectual," Professor Said maintains, "the modern critic has become a cleric in the worst sense of the word." It is not clear to me what the worst sense of the word is, or why it is invoked here, unless someone is proposing to suppress priests and ban their writings. Is it now a crime for Northrop Frye to write a book about the bible; or for René Girard, another named cleric, to write *Violence and the Sacred*?

I suppose there is no point in making a big scene about three regrettable pages. The rest of the book is, in the best sense of the words, provocative and exacting; the essays provoke due interrogation of contemporary literary theory, and exact from the reader the care and conscientiousness the questions at issue warrant. Professor Said's theme is the bearing of literary theory, the historical sense, and political intentions. Particular essays concentrate on the question of originality, the force of repetition, the genesis of literature, and the disabilities of the American "left" in criticism. These essays are formidable scrutinies. There are also essays on Swift and Conrad that raise fundamental and entirely unhackneyed questions about the diverse relations of reality, action, and language. Modern criticism as such is examined in a fairly general spirit: nothing comprehensive is intended. The reader is expected to know the score already, and to be inward enough with Structuralism and Deconstruction to follow an argument about them. The critics most elaborately examined include Lukacs, Goldmann, Raymond Williams, Michel Foucault, and Jacques Derrida. Essays, toward the back of the book, on Raymond Schwab, Joseph Renan, and Massignon are best read alongside Professor Said's recent books on Orientalism and the Palestinian question.

On the whole, Professor Said's sense of what has been happening in literary theory in the past few years is rueful and disappointed. He says that what was a bold critical enterprise, ten years ago, has declined into complacency; in particular, into the complacent acceptance of "textuality." He doesn't define textuality or go into any detail about it. I assume he is referring to the hypothesis that the objects of study in the human sciences are to be deciphered and interpreted as if they were texts, rather than considered as substances or realities that the student undertakes to know. The hypothesis has many consequences, including the privileging of the student over what he studies, and the suppression of the claims to any representing power that might be implied by the denotative ambition in lan-

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guage. Professor Said's specific objection to textuality is that it inscribes upon every object or event merely the equal status of being textual: it reduces every object of attention to the same anonymous, disembodied fate. "As it is practised in the American academy today," Professor Said argues, "literary theory has for the most part isolated textuality from the circumstances, the events, the physical senses that made it possible and render it intelligible as the result of human work." Later, Professor Said refers to "the finally reconciling element of textuality," and he makes it clear that the reconciliation, which he resents, has been achieved by displacing history and circumventing politics. What corresponds to textuality, in political terms, is "the principle of noninterference": its way of appropriating its subject matter is "*not* to appropriate anything that is worldly, circumstantial, or socially contaminated."

Professor Said's position is

> that texts are worldly, to some degree they are events, and, even when they appear to deny it, they are nevertheless a part of the social world, human life, and of course the historical moments in which they are located and interpreted.

Put like that, his position sounds fairly conventional. Theories tend to become well-wrought urns. Old-fashioned historical critics have made much the same complaint about the New Criticism that Professor Said is making about textuality. Edmund Wilson might have made it as he readied himself to write *To the Finland Station*. Still, it is my impression that Professor Said would prefer to be called an old-fashioned historical critic rather than to settle for the weightlessness of the particular theorizing he has come to dislike.

"Come to dislike" is accurate, because Professor Said's analysis of contemporary literary theory in his *Beginnings: Intention and Method* (1975) was far more favorably inclined than any chapter in his new book. He has become much more skeptical about such received ideas as that of "the self-sufficient text" or the alleged limitlessness or indeterminacy of interpretation. If you compare the chapters on Foucault and Derrida in *Beginnings* with Professor Said's commentary on these writers in the new book, you see just how far, and how dispiritedly, he has removed himself from them. His account of Foucault's work, a mere eight

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years ago, was zestful and enthusiastic; he praised Foucault's attitude for "its affirmativeness, its progressivism, and its energetic discoveries." In the new book, emphasis falls rather on Foucault's "curiously passive and sterile view not so much of the uses of power, but of how and why power is gained, used, and held onto." Foucault's theory of power

> is a Spinozist conception, which has captivated not only Foucault himself but many of his readers who wish to go beyond Left optimism and Right pessimism so as to justify political quietism with sophisticated intellectualism, at the same time wishing to appear realistic, in touch with the world of power and reality, as well as historical and antiformalistic in their bias.

The animus in that sentence—"captivated" having the effect of releasing it from whatever loyalty may have held it back till then—is unmistakable; it can only be explained as arising from Professor Said's sense that he, too, was captivated for a while by Foucault's rhetoric and failed to detect its political despair. It is not that Foucault has changed; the change is in Professor Said. As for Derrida: his work never took full possession of Professor Said's mind, as Foucault's did, so there is less to be disowned. Still, Professor Said now goes out of his way to say that Derrida's work "embodies an extremely pronounced self-limitation, an ascesis of a very inhibiting and crippling sort." The work, in short, has not demanded "from its disciples any binding engagement on matters pertaining to discovery and knowledge, freedom, oppression, or injustice." The argument is clear, that Derrida's work gives the reader, in the end, permission not to care. If defeat is already inscribed in the text of my life, I may as well shrug it off and proceed as if I were captain of my soul and body.

Professor Said's second thoughts about Foucault and, to a slighter extent, Derrida, seem to have taken him by surprise. I am surprised that he is surprised by, say, Foucault's insistence upon the anonymity of power; how it is exercised, evidently, without anybody in particular exercising it. It is nowhere, by being everywhere. It follows that there is no place at which resistance can be effected. I can't see what is surprising in the argument, though I see the scandal of it. It seems to me that if you start with "rejection of the human subject as grounding center for human knowledge"—to use a phrase from Professor Said's essay on the matter in *Beginnings*—it follows as night the day that the exercise of power is total and anonymous. What else could it be? Professor Said's recent emphasis on the validity of action, intention, work, and change does him honor, but it was never compatible with the theories—or at least some of them—he endorsed a few years ago.

COMING:

John Hersey
on
Henry Luce.

WHAT HE ENDORSES now, in any case, is "oppositional criticism." Criticism must think of itself, he says, "as life-enhancing and constitutively opposed to every form of tyranny, domination, and abuse; its social goals are noncoercive knowledge produced in the interests of human freedom." I don't know anyone who would quarrel with that program, in theory, though its practice would be another question. The program is much the same as Kenneth Burke's in *Counterstatement*: "when in Rome, do as the Greeks." And Burke's version has the advantage of not having a name. If you call some activity "oppositional criticism," you offer it to your disciples as something to be pursued. I hate to think of all those critical Saidettes turning out their oppositional essays.

This is where Professor Said's chapters on Swift may be usefully invoked. Between 1711 and 1713 Swift wrote for the Tory government, and more specifically for St. John. *The Conduct of the Allies*, which appeared at the end of November 1711, is a clear instance of the service of pen to party. It's not, in fact, much of a work, though its success at the time was remarkable. Samuel Johnson was accurate in saying of it that Swift "had to count ten, and he has counted it right." What Swift mainly counted on was the inclination of his readers to believe that the best type of Englishman was a true-born landed gentleman, rather than a moneyed Whig, and that nature, culture, history, and peace-loving Christian principles now favored making peace on St. John's lines. You could argue that the *Conduct* is just a hack's work for his patrons, and that any brilliant journalist could have written it. No matter: what it provides for Professor Said is an exemplary instance of "writing in a world of power." In certain moods, it is hard to regard writing as anything but a helpless and hapless activity, a mug's game, as T. S. Eliot once called it. This impression of it comes quickly to mind when writers and critics make extravagant claims for the "power" of literature and its "effect" upon the world. But Professor Said wants to believe that the act of writing, in a world in which particular people exert real power, is fruitful; that it makes a difference; and that "to write" is "a function never exhausted by the completion of a piece of writing." It is not exhausted, because it is propelled by the desire to live, to work, and to intervene in worldly affairs.

Swift offers an instance of writing, in this italicized sense. He was always intervening in some business or other. So much for practice, or rather praxis. But the theory of it comes most vigorously, for Professor Said's purpose, from Antonio Gramsci. In a general way, he is edified to find Gramsci asserting in his prison notebooks and elsewhere that thought is produced so that actions may be accomplished. Professor Said has no time for "pure" thought or contemplation, whatever the majesty of the tradition in its favor. But, more specifically, what he admires in Gramsci is a far more telling theory of power than Foucault's. Gramsci never loses sight

> of the great central facts of power, and how they flow through a whole network of agencies operating by rational consent, or of the detail—diffuse, quotidian, unsystematic, thick—from which inevitably power draws its sustenance, on which power depends for its daily bread.

When this theme comes up, Professor Said tends to quote Nicos Poulantzas's *State, Power, Socialism*. But he always has in mind, too, Gramsci's theory of the role of the intelligentsia in a Marxist vision of authority; especially his distinction between "organic intellectuals" and "traditional intellectuals." Gramsci insisted that revolutionary change can take place only on a plane higher than that of economy. It is the function of intellectuals to develop in the masses a

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critical consciousness. This work, he maintained, is to be done by organic intellectuals, who identify themselves with the class or group from which they have derived; and not at all by traditional intellectuals, who claim to speak for historical continuity uninterrupted by political formations or social events. Traditional intellectuals speak for that which remains the same while everything else changes. Organic intellectuals try to effect the changes by persuading their citizens to make them.

It now emerges that there are two contexts in which Professor Said's book may be read. In the first, it provides an extremely disappointed if not betrayed account of the present situation in literary theory. In the second, it indicates, for Professor Said's benefit as much as for the enlightenment of his readers, the sort of thing an organic intellectual may decide to do, the kind of interventions he may look for. The two contexts are indeed contiguous, and the same values are active in both. The impoverishment Professor Said finds in contemporary literary theory is a matter of political inertia, skepticism, apathy, quietism; the same considerations testify to an asserted possibility in the second context. In either context, the book issues from a remarkably sharp intelligence, forcing us to face questions and possibilities that literary theorists on the whole prefer not even to raise.

DENIS DONOGHUE

Denis Donoghue is the author most recently of *Ferocious Alphabets* (Little, Brown).

A NASTY LITTLE WAR

"Benevolent Assimilation": The American Conquest of the Philippines, 1899-1903 by Stuart Creighton Miller

(Yale University Press, 340 pp., $25)

Two hundred thousand U.S. soldiers moved in and out of the country with the newest weapons, but could not destroy the few thousand revolutionaries. The failure was not due to a lack of will or brutality. After the capture of one town, a U.S. soldier was found shot and mutilated. His commander promptly ordered the town burned and "every native in sight" killed. The troops exterminated one thousand men, women, and children. Revolutionaries retaliated by castrating the bodies of U.S. soldiers, putting the genitals in the dead men's mouths, then leaving the corpses to rot in the sun. One American officer responded by ordering every native male over the age of ten to be shot.

Back home public opinion was sharply divided. Some religious and liberal political groups condemned the war while vowing to defeat the President in the next election. Other religious journals supported the conquests of the pious man in the White House. "Has it ever occurred to you that Jesus was the most imperial of the imperialists?" asked the *Missionary Record*. With each side convinced it was on the Hotline to God, the President—whose shrewd and devious political moves were masked by a charming and innocent personality—was able to follow his own policy.

That policy was to press the military campaigns to the hilt while denying that atrocities were occurring, or to argue that if they were occurring, there were fewer than the year before. If that explanation did not wash, the Administration attacked the antiwar critics as "traitors to their country."

Such was the experience of the United States in dealing with the Philippine insurrection of 1899 to 1902. History, of course, does not exactly repeat itself. The war in El Salvador does not exactly resemble that in Vietnam. U.S. experiences in Vietnam did not exactly resemble those in the Philippine revolution. But at points the parallels are close enough to be surprising and, when discussed by a good historian, instructive. Stuart Creighton Miller, who teaches at San Francisco State, is an excellent historian. So his analysis of how American politicians and generals mishandled their attempt to subjugate the Philippines, after taking the islands from Spain in the 1898 war, is instructive on a number of levels.

Perhaps most important is his conclusion about the military campaigns: "It was not long before the Americans realized that they had won the battles but not the war." Or, as he quotes a U.S. newspaper editorial of 1901, the difficulty was that after two years of fighting, "a conquered people" refused to

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remain conquered. The assessment resembles Colonel Harry Summers's telling story in his *On Strategy* of an encounter with a North Vietnamese colonel in 1975. "You know you never defeated us on the battlefield," Summers remarked. "That may be so," the North Vietnamese replied, "but it is also irrelevant." Summers made sense of that observation by placing it in a larger political context. In 1901 the same approach was apt, although the historical context was quite different.

For the generation that took the Philippines (and Cuba and Puerto Rico), the slaughter of the Plains Indians between 1860 and 1892 was the reference point. "The country won't be pacified until the niggers [i.e., the Filipinos] are killed off like the Indians," a veteran from Kansas informed one reporter. Miller repeatedly emphasizes that perspective. By doing so, he links decades of American expansionism and racism to U.S. policy in the Philippines. The experience of 1899 to 1902 was not the "aberration" in the American experience that a famous historian once claimed. Miller also helps explain why the well-intentioned policy of President William McKinley degenerated into the horrors of mass atrocities. McKinley's Vice President and successor, Theodore Roosevelt, had made a reputation as a hunter in the American West and for fighting publicly (if not all that well) in Cuba. T.R. congratulated U.S. army commanders for successful campaigns even as particularly horrible atrocities against the Filipinos were coming to light. Roosevelt privately told his Secretary of War that he did not intend "to repeat the folly of which our people were sometimes guilty . . . when they patted hostile Indians."

Some Americans wondered whether there was a third alternative to patting or killing Filipinos. The McKinley Administration, led by Roosevelt, answered with the charge that anti-imperialism "dishonored the flag," and tried to gag the critics by not allowing a leading anti-imperialist, Edward Atkinson, to use the U.S. mail for his propaganda. The censorship promptly made Atkinson a hero to people who otherwise would have paid him no attention. The Blimpian U.S. commander in the islands, General Elwell Otis, also tried to censor the bad news coming out of his campaigns. When protests erupted, Otis claimed that censorship had never existed, then promised that it was ending. After several such episodes, one editor wondered aloud about Otis's sanity. But then Otis and the other commanders had never experienced such frustration while fighting Indians. In the Indian wars it was a mere matter of killing. In the Philippines it was a revolution.

Otis tried to deal with his frustration by frequently announcing "that the thing is entirely over. I cannot see where it is possible for the guerrillas to affect any reorganization." Such victory statements were then followed by the General's request to McKinley for additional thousands of U.S. troops. The fresh men, Otis said, were only needed to protect the good natives against the small "wild and savage bands who are too lazy to work." McKinley stood by his inept commander until the political fires became too hot at home. He then replaced Otis with General Arthur MacArthur (Douglas's father). MacArthur's statements at least sounded different from Otis's. The new commander anticipated later soldier-statesmen who sometimes had difficulty clearly explaining their policies. ("If the stages of primary tuition, under the guidance and control of constructive statesmanship, are conserved by such freedom of action as is essential to spontaneous growth, there can scarcely be a doubt as to the ultimate result," he informed one group of puzzled civilians.)

MacArthur's syntax hid an important turn in American strategy. He understood that he was involved in a "unique war" in which the guerrillas depended on the population. MacArthur focused his military efforts against these supporters, even as he offered amnesty to civilians and soldiers who would leave rebel forces. These tactics did not end the war. It went on, as indigenous revolutions tend to do, even after U.S. forces captured the guerrillas' leader, Emilio Aguinaldo. But MacArthur's tactics and bluntness indicated how victory could be achieved. They also opened the way to some of the worst atrocities committed by U.S. troops against civilians in the war.

In his conclusion, Miller offers a succinct discussion of the similarities and contrasts between the Philippine conflict and the Vietnam War. The final results, of course, were wholly different, for the United States won the former and lost the latter. Roosevelt, whose reputation should suffer considerably because of this book, and his commanders finally triumphed, in part because of their use of racism, brutality, and censorship. It was, however, a short-lived triumph. By 1907 T.R. lamented that strategically the Philippines had become our "Achilles heel." Soon many of those who had justified atrocities in order to conquer the islands began to wonder how such a vulnerable and unprofitable possession could be pushed to independence. For Roosevelt and his fellow imperialists, a particularly cruel blow came from their hero, Rudyard Kipling. The poet of British expansionism chuckled in public that the fights between U.S. military and civilian critics over the Philippines, and "the pig headedness of the military and their habits of setting 'bulldogs to catch rabbits,' " reminded him of the British embarrassments against the Boers in South Africa.

But McKinley and Roosevelt had stayed the course. The United States won the war in the Philippines. Fortunately, there have been few other such victories in American history. Unfortunately, there have been other attempts.

WALTER LAFEBER

Walter LaFeber teaches at Cornell, and among his books is the forthcoming *Inevitable Revolutions: The U.S. in Central America* (Norton).

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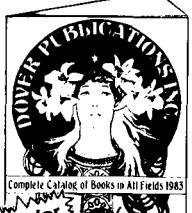

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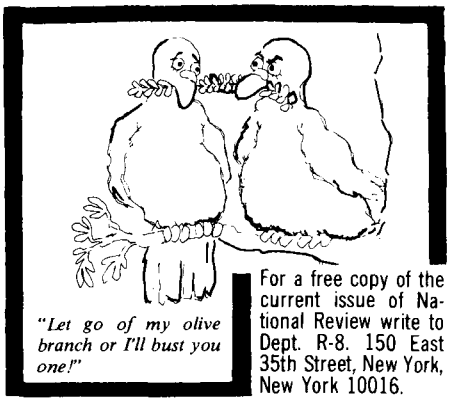

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A Scientific Quest

The Discovery of Insulin by Michael Bliss

(University of Chicago Press, 304 pp., $20)

The scientific literature has its purposes, but accurate description of who discovered what is not first among them. By strict convention, scientists may not allude to self, motive, or personal history in their professional writings. The idea, presumably, is to help foster the appearance of objectivity. But the consequence is that the scientific literature is often sketchy on who deserves the credit for what discovery. On the rare occasions when a scientific discovery is carefully analyzed by a historian or journalist, a version may emerge that bears little resemblance to the generally accepted account.

Michael Bliss, a historian at the University of Toronto, has investigated the university's most famous achievement, the discovery of insulin in 1922. According to the conventional account, insulin was discovered by two neophyte medical researchers, Frederick Banting and Charles Best. They succeeded where others failed, goes this version, because they first inactivated the digestive enzymes of the pancreas that otherwise destroy the insulin the organ produces. Banting and Best's achievement was not understood by the Nobel Foundation in Stockholm when it assigned its medicine prize in 1923 to the discovery of insulin; bypassing Best, it gave the prize to Banting and to John Macleod, the dour Scotsman who headed the laboratory where Banting and Best worked and who was absent on his summer vacation when the crucial experiments were done.

Banting was so outraged that he announced he was sharing his half of the Nobel Prize with Best. Macleod thereupon declared that he would divide his with another researcher, John Collip. This was possibly the only time that the recipients so directly contested the decree of the Nobel selectors. The embarrassment the dispute engendered cast a pall over the facts of the case, which has remained essentially unexamined, despite the rich written record left by the participants. Bliss's inquiry, therefore, is most welcome.

By reconstructing the course of the experiments day by day and dog by dog, Bliss has provided an intriguing vignette of the process of discovery at work. Perhaps his most remarkable finding is that almost everything Banting and Best did was probably wrong—a series of misinterpreted experiments based on erroneous theory. They thought they had kept a diabetic dog alive by injecting it with their preparation of insulin; but more likely they accidently left a small part of the pancreas behind when they operated to remove the gland. The theory behind Banting's research was that by tying shut the duct of the pancreas, he would cause degeneration of the cells producing digestive enzymes—which were what, he supposed, had destroyed the antidiabetic principle in the gland when previous researchers had tried to extract it. Modern research shows this theory to be incorrect.

In a formal sense, Banting and Best accomplished so little that they could not get a patent on their work: the patent examiner said they had been anticipated by Ludwig Zuelzer, a German researcher who had reduced diabetic symptoms with pancreatic extracts in the early 1900s. The secret of Banting and Best's achievement was a fortuitous conjunction of favorable circumstances—an ingredient that predominates in many scientific discoveries, yet is subtly embedded in the fabric of research and so seldom recognized. Banting and Best indeed did little more than their many predecessors—except to try in the right place and at the right time.

The infant science of biochemistry had advanced enough by the 1920s that when Banting and Best were wondering how to extract the antidiabetic principle from pancreas glands, Macleod advised them to chill the glands immediately upon removal from the animal. This simple tip, which prevented the pancreas from digesting itself, enabled them to extract more insulin. This made their experiments effective enough to show they were on to something.

Macleod, Banting, and Best were all physiologists; Macleod, recognizing that a biochemist's skills were needed, enlisted John Collip to help. It was Collip who developed methods for extracting enough insulin for the first clinical experiments to begin. The results of insulin therapy were dramatic. Until then the best treatment that doctors could offer diabetics was essentially a starvation diet. To see these patients, pathetic bundles of skin and bone, suddenly begin to gain weight on a regimen of insulin injections, was like witnessing a miracle. But Collip's method worked only on the laboratory scale. It took months of work by Eli Lilly's chemists before insulin could reliably be mass produced, as it is today, from pig and cattle glands.

Bliss's careful study delineates the different contributions made by the four leading players in the discovery. Banting, the central character, was no delight to work with, physically assaulting Collip on one occasion when Collip declined to share his latest method for extracting insulin. Banting was irrationally hostile to Macleod, whom he suspected of trying to hog credit at every turn. Though lab chiefs sometimes do cheat their subordinates of credit, it is ironic that the sin should be imputed to Macleod. As Bliss shows, Macleod was in many ways the model of what a lab chief should be. He encouraged Banting to begin his insulin research, providing resources and the services of Best. He made the two young men repeat their experiments to get better results. He insisted that they alone sign the first paper announcing their discovery, turning down the invitation of being a co-author, and he turned the other cheek to most of Banting's paranoid accusations.

It's possible to disagree, however, with Bliss's contention that the Nobel Foundation was right to give its award to Macleod and Banting alone. The cruelly arbitrary rules of the prize specify that it can be shared by a maximum of three; hence the obviously fair solution, that of honoring Banting, Best, Macleod, and Collip, was impossible. The fact is that it was Banting and Best who served as catalysts for the discovery; they are the sole authors of the paper announcing it. The Nobel Committee had no legitimate basis for excluding Best. Many of today's lab chiefs would have added their names to the discovery paper, however, even if they had

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contributed a fraction of what Macleod did. Yet with the lure of the Nobel Prize, Macleod faltered a little. He overemphasized his role to a Danish scientist, whose support of Macleod turned the Nobel Committee in his favor.

So antihistorical is the scientific literature that disappointingly few of the critical events in the discovery of insulin can be inferred from it. Those who suspect that technical as well as historical fact may sometimes get short shrift in scientific reporting will not be surprised by the discrepancies between the findings Banting and Best reported and those they actually got. In the paper announcing their discovery to the world they stated that their extract of pancreas "has *always* produced" a reduction of sugar in body fluids. The evidence of their own notebooks, according to Bliss, is that out of 75 experiments, there were 42 positive results, 22 negative, and 11 inconclusive. A 42 to 75 ratio of positive results supports their claim: so why did Banting and Best need to assert the results were "always" positive? Rhetoric in science can play an important role, one that is the more insidious and effective for being vehemently denied.

Bliss's excellent account of the insulin story is a rare dissection of the anatomy of scientific discovery, and serves as a model of how rigorous historical method can correct the myths and legends sometimes perpetrated in the scientific literature.

NICHOLAS WADE

Nicholas Wade, who writes for *The New York Times*, is co-author with William Broad of *Betrayers of the Truth: Fraud and Deceit in the Halls of Science* (Simon and Schuster).

PROFESSOR MARX AT 100

Dialectic of Defeat: Contours of Western Marxism
by Russell Jacoby

(Cambridge University Press, 202 pp., s19.95)

The Left Academy: Marxist Scholarship on American Campuses
edited by Bertell Ollman and Edward Vernoff

(McGraw-Hill, 290 pp., s8.95 paper)

> With the exception of a few short chapters, every important part of the annals of the revolution . . . carries the heading: Defeat of the Revolution! But what succumbed in these defeats was not the revolution. It was the prerevolutionary traditional appendages . . . persons, illusions, conceptions, projects, from which the revolutionary party . . . could be freed . . . only by a series of defeats. . . . And we cry: *The revolution is dead!—Long live the revolution!*

When Marx wrote these words—filling in the spaces with his history of revolutionary failure and anticipation in 1848—he little suspected how often his followers would repeat them. Yet the discovery that keeping the revolutionary faith requires heroic constancy in the face of an ever-growing series of disappointments and defeats has been a recurring feature of Marxist history. Does the persistence of Marx's faith among his followers one hundred years after his death stem from a clearer vision of the revolutionary potential in capitalist society than the rest of us are willing to see? Or is it instead a hope, maintained like religious expectations of the millennium, against whatever evidence history and experience can bring? It is one of the virtues of Russell Jacoby's attempt to outline a specifically West European form of Marxism separate from Russian and third world models that he begins by honestly facing up to this dilemma: Too honestly, I suspect, to win friends among many who call themselves Marxists.

Jacoby begins by laying bare some tender wounds of recent Marxist history. Each revolution [illegible] or justified Marx's name—the Russian, [illegible] Maois[illegible] the Cuban—has been exalted as the long-awaited fulfillment of revolutionary prophecies and hopes, only to be abandoned and castigated by its earlier enthusiasts once events reveal the extent of its departure from Marx's original vision. The theoretical parallel to these disillusionments Jacoby finds in Louis Althusser's repeatedly frustrated search within Marx's writings for a form of pure scientific Marxism uncorrupted by any residue of Hegelian idealism. Althusser fastened on one of Marx's writings after another as embodiments of genuine scientific Marxism, abandoning each one in turn before concluding that a definitive "epistemological break" from Hegel never took place.

For non-Marxists the moral of these histories is likely to be a suspicion that the things Marxism predisposes its upholders to look for in the world often turn out not to be there. This is not Jacoby's conclusion. For him the Marxism that has followed these tortuous paths is neither the only nor the most attractive kind. Its weaknesses have their roots in Marx himself, but precisely at the point where Marx was infected with diseases rampant in the bourgeois society he sought to cure. Two features of bourgeois thinking have shaped Marxist theory: the worship of success and the commitment to science. Science and success were idols of the age in which Marxism arose, and it absorbed them. Convinced that a party able to triumph through revolution embodies the virtues of historical understanding that merit success, Marxists have hailed each successful revolution as the fulfillment of visionary hopes. Meanwhile the science whose success in controlling nature supported nineteenth-century Europe's conquest of the world became the model for orthodox Marxism's aspiration to master reality in a different way. Marxists like Althusser, who accept science as a model for theory, have distorted Marx much in the way that they and others have deformed history.

Can Marxism be purged of these disorders? Jacoby believes that one current within Marxism has always been free of them. It is a nonconformist breed, often rejected by the orthodox, but with a special claim to represent Marx's legacy in the developed West that first spawned vision Inoculated against the cult of success through its association [illegible] long train of lost causes, this [illegible] also alien to the scientism of [illegible] dox Marxists. It celebrates sponta-

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neous action and gives consciousness a central role in history beyond the ability of material circumstances to determine it. The Marxists in this tradition interpret Marx's writings by way of Hegel rather than Engels. Their Hegel, like their Marx, was a thinker who saw history as the development of rationality and freedom through the unfolding of human understanding and purpose, not as a field organized by ubiquitous dialectical laws also present in physical nature. Some of the Marxists Jacoby locates in this camp are well known and have been appealed to on similar grounds before: Rosa Luxemburg, Karl Korsch, Gyorgy Lukacs, Max Horkheimer, and Theodor W. Adorno. Others are less celebrated: Antonio Labriola, Paul Levi, Anton Pannekoek, Henri Lefebvre.

The deviations from Leninist orthodoxy that give coherence to this varied grouping reflect characteristics of the West that—Jacoby and some of his subjects agree—set it apart from Russia and the third world. The Russian Marxists and their successors never genuinely experienced what Marx identified as the central feature of modern Western experience: real and lasting domination by the bourgeoisie. The Russian middle classes never wielded real power. By contrast, bourgeois hegemony in the West was so long lasting and powerful that its effects spread beyond the spheres of production relations and political rule. The formative influence of bourgeois life and culture was so deep that it impressed its values on the very hearts and minds of the proletariat. Lenin's strategy of a tight-knit organization aimed at overthrowing a despotic but archaic regime did not speak to the necessary precondition of revolutionary change in the West: remaking working-class consciousness along lines that would genuinely free it from bourgeois cultural and psychological hegemony. It is this attention to consciousness in a variety of forms—culture, spiritual life, psychology, "subjectivity"—that marks the tradition of heterodox Western Marxism and sets it apart from the dominant elements of post-Leninist orthodoxy. Recognizing that genuine revolutionary transformation would require restructuring proletarian consciousness, Western Marxists have turned to programs and activities that emphasize struggle in the cultural and psychic realms equally with preparing economic and political change.

As a guide to these currents in Marxism, Russell Jacoby is certainly to be recommended. He packs a great deal into a short book without making it dense. He is learned without being imposing, by turns original, insightful, and illuminating. Attractive as Jacoby's work may be, however, there are important reasons for questioning it as a guide to the "contours of Western Marxism." The currents and figures he evokes represent a small and select segment of that terrain. Some of their resistance to Leninist orthodoxy derives from their links to tendencies outside Marxism or at best on its fringes, notably (in the case of Pannekoek) strains of anarchist theory and practice as well as (in the case of Labriola) elements of ethical idealism in many ways closer to Kantian moral absolutism than to Hegel. These elements give a special cast to the views Jacoby seeks to place at the center of Western Marxism, and cast doubt on the claim that its contrasts with orthodoxy should be seen primarily as responses to the specifically Western experience of bourgeois spiritual hegemony Pannekoek and others invoked. From the time of its first great impact during the 1880s and 1890s, Marxism knit together traditions that had existed independently before, linking reformist socialism and anarchism through the vision of revolutionary transformation as the outcome inherent in the whole of Western history. But the separate traditions always interpreted Marx's doctrine in their own way, each tilting the theoretical balance toward its own viewpoint in the name of a Marxism brought closer to historical reality. Jacoby continues that practice on behalf of the subjectivist currents he favors.

TO THE HISTORIAN with less personal stake in the outcome of these debates, Jacoby's attempt to identify Western Marxism with the rejection of natural science as a model for theory seems particularly in need of revision. This is an old debate within Marxism, going back well before World War I, as Jacoby points out. Like others who take his point of view, Jacoby claims Marx himself for the antiscientific camp. It is true that Marx sometimes speaks as if the historical world was subject to constant reconstruction through creative human activity in a way that dooms any attempt to place it under the control of regular, predictive, scientific laws. But at other moments, and equally important, Marx clearly takes the enterprise of science as a model for his theoretical project, seeking to comprehend hidden laws of motion that determine social evolution behind the backs of conscious human actors. The division among Marxists since Marx, whether to set history within nature or against it, does not oppose a true Marx to a false one, but places one side of Marx against another.

There are many reasons—some historical, some theoretical—why this debate has been endemic to Marxism from the start. Some of these reasons are innate to the kind of doctrine Marxism is. A program of action justified by advance anticipations of where history is going, based on a theory that claims to comprehend the way all the parts of society fit together, can hardly escape a path that alternates between seeing history as subject to regular laws and viewing it as molded by conscious activity. To impose a priori expectations on history in the name of joining theory to practice is to invite the dialectic that moves between setting history in a frame of law-like regularity and setting it in a frame of creative subjectivity. At moments or in situations when experience and observation support the expectations theory imposes, society appears under the sign of regular, lawful development. When that is not the

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case, the commitment to action imposes a disdain for observed experience—"So much the worse for facts," in Lukacs's formula—and tips the balance toward conscious action. For most of Jacoby's heroes the appeal to consciousness, spirit, and culture arose out of pessimism about the real prospects for revolutionary transformation in the West.

That pessimism colors Jacoby's own allegiance to the heterodox Marxism of subjectivity too. Jacoby absorbs one blow to Marxist faith after another, from its theorists' infection by the viruses of bourgeois mentality to the proletariat's refusal to display a revolutionary class consciousness. Somehow he is sustained by the reflection that the fulfillment of Marx's vision would not require frequent or regular development toward revolution: "A single instance suffices. . . . In the recesses of the blackest pessimism pulsates a secret optimism." I confess that the sources of this optimism remain hidden from me. What sustains it? What does it mean?

SOME ANSWERS to those questions emerge, rather unexpectedly, from a very different but closely related book, the collection Bertell Ollman and Edward Vernoff have gathered as *The Left Academy*. The authors of these essays all set out to demonstrate the variety and breadth of contemporary, academic Marxism rather than to take sides within it. In this they succeed very well. The seven essays—on sociology, economics, political science, philosophy, psychology, history, and anthropology—make clear (for those who do not know it at first hand) how large a presence Marxism has come to occupy in American academic life since the 1960s. Hundreds of courses in our universities take Marxism as a launching point or as subject. Of the fields considered here psychology appears as the one with the most awkward and uncertain relationship to Marxism, while some of the knottiest problems Marxists face in coming to grips with reality appear in connection with political studies—particularly the nature of the state. In philosophy the specifically American contributions are less clear than elsewhere. From the material presented it would seem that history, sociology, and economics are the fields with the strongest and most interesting Marxist components.

There are various problems with the collection. Given the lack of correspondence between Marxist theory and ordinary disciplinary boundaries, there is necessarily much repetition. Sometimes the surveys lapse into mere lists of titles: the real flavor of Marxist scholarship, what it is like to be stimulated and sometimes exasperated by it, too seldom comes through. There is no attention to criticism of Marxist scholarship by others. Some of the assertions made in passing should not pass unchallenged, for instance Richard Flacks's claim that Marxism provides the best way to understand its own failures. That kind of intellectual bravado reminds us that Marx's vision refurbished an older image of humanity raising itself up by its own bootstraps.

Although the issues Russell Jacoby addresses are not taken up explicitly, their presence can be felt from time to time. At one point the economist Herbert Gintis seems to espouse the ethos of scientific rationalism Jacoby warns against; but other writers, notably the historians Michael Merrill and Michael Wallace, appear closer to Jacoby's side. The political scientist Mark Kesselman is of all the authors the most sensitive to the dilemmas that produce Jacoby's pessimism, quoting Raymond Williams's grim recognition that Marxists

> are no longer in any position to cry great names or announce necessary laws, and expect to be believed. The information and the scepticism are already too thoroughly lodged at the back of our own minds.

Yet Kesselman remains a Marxist, convinced that in our current situation, the only alternatives are socialism or barbarism.

Most of the contributors to *The Left Academy* owe their radicalization to the 1960s; certainly the explosion of academic Marxism these essays describe was ignited then. The editors' opening claim that a "Marxist cultural revolution is taking place today in American universities" misses the point: the revolution occurred fifteen years ago; what we are now witnessing is its domestication. Despite continuing resistance in some quarters, Marxist professors enjoy tenure at prestigious universities, and their books are published by staid and established presses. Academic Marxism is just that: the Marxism of scholars, morally and politically engaged to be sure, but also committed to the scholarly standards that rule among non-Marxists. Among the impulses that inspire their radicalism is the suspicion about power and domination natural to the young in an age of uncertain opportunities. However sincere and profound their desire to link their intellectual work to a real political movement, most of them know—or should know—that the liberal academy provides the only possible support for their activity as Marxists in late twentieth-century America.

That situation is reflected in the way several contributors to *The Left Academy* approach the problem of saying what Marxism is. One can describe Marxism in terms that stress its continuities with nonrevolutionary liberalism and radicalism or its contrasts. Merrill and Wallace certainly choose the first option: their list of Marxism's defining characteristics begins by describing it as critical, materialist, and rationalist. So was the Enlightenment. When they come to revolution, they gloss it as meaning that only human beings "can make the world true," that only humanity can liberate itself from injustice and contradiction. Flacks takes a similar approach. These may be partly strategies to widen the appeal of Marxism to liberals and rationalists, but they are also, and at least equally, genuine expressions of what Marxism means to these writers.

I do not mean to present the academic left as a set of paper tigers. Some are angry and some are genuinely revolutionary. But their Marxism—like all Marxism—does not flow from the experience or even the observation of the workers whom it makes central to history. Radicalism and even revolution may rise out of working-class experience, but Marxism belongs to the middle classes. It can flourish (its current American version is not the only example) with only very tenuous and uncertain links to workers. Its vision of a world created by the liberated productive energies of society and organized to promote the simultaneous all-round development of all its members is—to use Marx's vocabulary—a bourgeois vision. That these hopes and expectations are then projected onto the working classes is one reason why they have so often been disappointed.

Similar observations have been made before, but the two books here under review cause them to appear in a clearer light. That the class divisions within modern society do not generate the utopian energies Marx thought he saw in them does not make them any less a

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central feature of our experience. Their existence means that the values and assumptions generated within middle-class life meet resistance when they claim to encompass society as a whole. Marxism is a response to this contradiction. The demands it makes on society and history are those certain members of the middle classes make on themselves. Like the forms of avant-garde art, its varieties receive freer expression under liberal capitalism than under any existing socialist regime. The Marxism surveyed in *The Left Academy* emanates from the experience of middle-class students in the 1960s: its style and language recall other forms of protest and disillusionment that arose in that crisis-ridden decade. The Marxism that Russell Jacoby identifies with the West just as clearly reveals its links to other oppositional forms of middle-class culture: its emphasis on subjectivity, appeal to a consciousness not dependent on material conditions, freedom from party allegiance, and rejection of past historical lessons about the course of revolutionary change all fit the intellectual and psychic needs of the radical middle-class intellectuals it represents. Jacoby even associates himself with what have often been the "dirty words" of modern protest for Marxists: romanticism, subjectivism, aestheticism, utopianism. Marx's own appeal to science was partly an attempt to inoculate socialism against these forms of individualistic, "bourgeois" consciousness. A Marxism that moves closer to them charts its return to the middle classes out of which it arose.

IN OUR CENTURY horrors that should not be forgotten have been done in the name of Marxism. That its votaries within our society frankly declare the limits within which they accept the liberal values that sustain them is reason for regarding them with a cautious eye. But any moves to revive McCarthyism should be firmly rejected. The Marxist presence in the academy has been a rich source of intellectual energy and a vigorous contributor to a vital intellectual life during the past decade. Marxists can be counted on to keep the privileged from forgetting what life is like for the majority in any social situation. They continually remind us about repressed and defeated possibilities in modern life that the rest of us too willingly forget. We need to insist on the importance of our differences with them. But they are neighbors next to whom we should be neither surprised nor reluctant to live.

JERROLD SEIGEL

Jerrold Seigel, professor of history at Princeton, is the author of *Marx's Fate: The Shape of a Life* (Princeton University Press).

BRIEF REVIEW

The Tennis Handsome by Barry Hannah

(Knopf, 170 pp., $11.95)

I had heard about Barry Hannah, had seen the raves for his short story collection *Airships*, the modified raptures for his novel *Ray*, and so I was eager to read him. I wish now I had passed him by. His new novel is a lax drifting cloud of a book, full of casual mayhem. There are suicides and strokes, eyes are gouged out and legs are broken. And this is only in the first thirty pages. Later on a man is shot with a crossbow, a woman is raped by a walrus, and an American soldier incinerates twenty V.C. with a fire gun. In the John Irving manner, these scenes are narrated without feeling; unplotted and unmotivated, they are like the violence in children's cartoons. The crime pages of *The New York Times* are more shocking, pack more emotional punch, and so are closer to literature than this TV writing.

I see a want ad. It says: "Wanted. A novelist. Must be interested in cutting people up. Literarily—in words. Must also be indifferent to the human psyche as well as to social and political reality. Job requires moderate fluency in English. (It helps to be Southern.)" And Barry Hannah, curious, answered the ad.

The novel involves the doings of a handsome, imbecile tennis player, his fond coach, his promiscuous mother, his doctor friend, and the obligatory Vietnam veteran, your stock symbol of rage and anomie. There is no plot, no unfolding logic of development, no growth of character. These people are simply stewed together in a lurid gumbo of inconsequence—unwholesome, flavorless, and indigestible.

J. B.

TRB, *from page 6*

moving these missiles from the earth, and also the fears that they cause." Happy day. It is a rationalization, I confess, that I haven't yet quite worked up to.

I find myself growing nostalgic. I was one of the gawky boys who volunteered in Mr. Wilson's dream to make the world safe for democracy. But when I reached Washington on my first assignment, I found that the war had all been a mistake. Isolationism was back. Harding was President and Henry Cabot Lodge was chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee. What a crew: William Borah and Hiram Johnson and George Moses. I was here, too, on that December Sunday in 1941 huddled with other reporters under the White House columns on the portico. There was a thin moon and Senators in overcoats rolled up in their cars to hear F.D.R. tell them the horrid news of Pearl Harbor. They came in silence and went in silence and we were so awed on the portico that we did not even ask Hiram Johnson, the great isolationist, what he thought of it. Out on Pennsylvania Avenue a little crowd watched from behind the iron fence and toward midnight tried to sing "America the Beautiful." Nobody could sing "America the Beautiful." Their voices quavered. It made me cry.

That was a long time ago. And yet generations later the same two-thirds treaty ratification requirement that killed Mr. Wilson's League blocked the Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty. SALT II culminated seven years' work begun by President Nixon. In a Congress of 535 members, 33 Senators plus one can block a treaty. What a queer system. The years between the League in 1920, and the failure of SALT II, incidentally, confine this particular reporter's life like a parenthesis.

* * *

And so, if the gentle reader will pardon a personal note, while President Reagan appeared in a jolly skit on stage, wearing a serape, down below, one TRB was preparing to change into another one in the ancient rite of transubstantiation. Reporters write on water and the gaudy democratic show continues. And democracy itself? As E. B. White tentatively puts it, "Democracy is the recurrent suspicion that more than half the people are right more than half the time."

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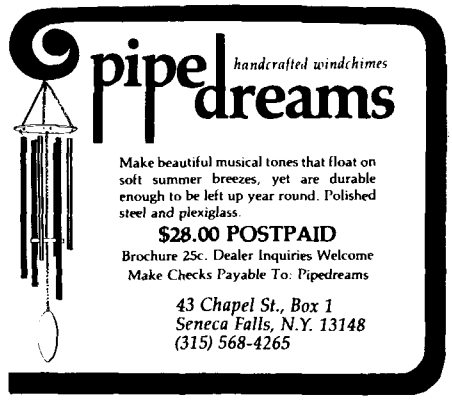
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NEW YORK DIARIST

The Big City After Dark

'BEAT THE MOVIE TAX' blares the marquee of a movie theater in my neighborhood. The last time cantilevered political announcements dotted New York was back in the 1960s, when theater owners waged a quixotic assault on pay TV. (Could pay sunshine be far behind?) Now the enemies are the state and city governments, which last January proposed modest taxes on the performing arts, and this time the marquees are winning. The crucial difference seems to be that they have made common cause with the American Ballet Theater, the Metropolitan Opera, and various Broadway producers, all of whom have managed to successfully portray the tax as—get this—"regressive." Though Mayor Koch is still trying to impose a 3 percent tax (adding a dollar or two to the cost of the highest priced theater tickets), Governor Cuomo quickly backed off a similar proposal that included other amusements like bowling and golfing. An acquaintance who follows Albany politics insists that this was more an accommodation to the ninepin constituency than to the people who go to see *Sophie's Choice* and *Cats*, but I'd gladly see the former bought off in the interest of taxing the latter. Particularly after reading dumb quotes from impresarios like Bernard B. Jacobs, president of the Shubert Organization. "Ticket prices are sufficiently high," he complained to the *Times*, as if that were someone else's fault. Jacobs is currently charging as much as $45 a seat to see *A Chorus Line*. By today's standards, that's hardly highway robbery; over the past ten years, average ticket prices have beaten inflation by 29 percent. Like many other people who don't own yachts, I've accommodated the new order by no longer going to the theater unless I can get half-price tickets. But now that the theater has become a luxury, it's only fair to tax it like one.

FINER SENSIBILITIES around here have been savoring the newly reprinted *WPA Guide to New York*, written by unemployed literary types like John Cheever. It's an awkward legacy of an otherwise great liberal program; why wasn't Cheever out working on a road team? I haven't read the *WPA Guide*, but when I moved to Manhattan someone gave me a faded 1948 paperback titled *New York: Confidential!* (subtitle: *The Big City After Dark*). The authors are Jack Lait, editor of the *New York Daily Mirror*, and Lee Mortimer, the *Mirror*'s Broadway columnist. Their previous works include *Chicago: Confidential!* and *Washington: Confidential!* Although billed as a guidebook, *New York: Confidential!* is really a book of Gotham etiquette for snap-brim guys and pearls-and-peroxide dolls. Page for page, I would guess that it has infinitely more material of interest to amateur social historians than a hundred W.P.A. guides. The chapter headings offer a quick gloss on whom to be wary of in the New York of the late '40s: "Glamour Pusses," "White Way Wolves," "Party Girls," etc. I was particularly glad to find a whole chapter on party girls, because I've never really known what they were. "The common error," wrote Lait and Mortimer, "is to confuse her with a 'call girl' and let it go at that." But there was a "definite distinction," although admittedly there were "borderline cases." Party girls tended to come from places like "Texas, Oklahoma, Florida, or a small Pennsylvania town," and generally had "ambitions to become a model or an actress." Such girls "quickly find themselves invited to cocktail parties given in swank apartments, where the local wolves get an opportunity to look them over." Those parties "usually are thrown by hosts who make their living that way. They are smooth, suave characters with an unlimited acquaintance among show people, artists, and models, and have access to every fresh young thing in town."

THE ECONOMIC RELATIONSHIP among all these shady types was fairly complex. The "guests" to these parties apparently were expected to reward their "hosts" by "buying fur coats or jewelry through them" or "giving them tips on the market or commissions on deals consummated through contacts made at these parties." They also paid an entrance fee. This money helped pay for the party girls, who made $50 and up just to attend a party. A party girl, Lait and Mortimer emphasized, was "under no obligation whatever to give more than her presence." Indeed, the whole financial arrangement seemed predicated on avoiding any quid pro quos. If she wanted to be respectable, a party girl could hold out for "a wealthy protector and a luxurious apartment, if not marriage." If not—well, "what she does on her own, of course, is her own business." But apparently there was more "bragging" than "propositioning" at these parties, so she had to be "a good listener."

ANOTHER PROMINENT social historian of the forties, A.J. Liebling, wrote affectionately of a building not far from where I work. Liebling called it the Jollity Building; its official name is the Brill Building. The status of the Jollity Building's inhabitants—a rafish assortment of gamblers and show business types—depended on what level of the building they inhabited; naturally, those who hung out in the lobby were at the bottom, and Liebling lavished special attention on these hard-luck cases. Because they tended to use the phone booths in the lobby as their offices, and drew from these booths "sustenance as well as shelter, as the buffalo did for the Arapahoe and Sioux," Morty, the rental agent of the building, called them "Telephone Booth Indians." "A Telephone Booth Indian on the hunt often tells a prospective investor to call him at a certain hour in the afternoon, giving the victim the number of the phone in one of the booths," Liebling wrote. "The Indian implies, of course, that it is a private line." Since I'm about to leave New York, I decided to take in the Brill Building. It was a real disappointment. Newly renovated, the Jollity Building sparkles far more than it ever did in its heyday. Lorne Michaels, the hugely successful television producer, has taken over much of the building, so it's lost its aura of failure. In rooms where ceiling fans once twirled listlessly, there are now modular couches and pastel photographs from "Saturday Night Live." And there are polished brass doors—which I couldn't budge—where the telephone booths used to be. They might as well tear the building down and put up a hotel.

TIMOTHY NOAH

Timothy Noah, a former TNR staff writer, is on the editorial staff of *The New York Times* Op-Ed page.

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HOW MUCH IS TOO MUCH TO DRINK IF YOU'RE DRIVING?

USING THIS CHART MAY HELP YOU KNOW YOUR LIMIT.

First, you should understand that drinking any amount of alcohol can impair your ability to drive.

The generally accepted way to measure intoxication is by your Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC). In most areas, the legal definition of intoxication is .10 percent BAC and above. However, long before you reach .10 BAC, your judgment and motor skills deteriorate rapidly. In fact, some states include the definition of impaired driving ability, which usually begins at .05 percent.

Important factors to keep in mind are how much you've drunk in a given period of time, how much you weigh and whether you've been eating. Your age, individual metabolism and experience with drinking are also factors. However, it simply is not true that beer or wine is less likely to make you drunk than so-called "hard" drinks. A 6-ounce glass of wine, a 12-ounce can of beer or 1½ ounces of 86-proof whiskey have about the same amount of alcohol and will have about the same effect on you.

How to estimate your Blood Alcohol Concentration. Although the effects of alcohol vary a great deal, the average effects are shown in the accompanying chart prepared by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. Find your weight in the left-hand column and then refer to the number of drinks you have had or intend to have over a two-hour period. For example, if you weigh 160 pounds and have had four beers over the first two hours you're drinking, your Blood Alcohol Concentration would be dangerously beyond .05 percent, and your driving ability would be seriously impaired—a dangerous driving situation. Six beers in the same period would give you a BAC of over .10 percent—the level generally accepted as proof of intoxication.

It is easier to get drunk than it is to get sober. The effects of drinking do taper off as the alcohol passes through your body, but the drop is slow. In the example above, the person who had six beers would still have significant traces of alcohol in his blood six hours later.

Even if you're not drinking, other drivers may be. Your best protection is still the seat belts in your car. Accidents do happen, and wearing lap and shoulder belts doubles your chances of coming through one alive.

DRINKS (TWO-HOUR PERIOD)

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120	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
140	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
160	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
180	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
200	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
220	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
240	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12

BE CAREFUL DRIVING BAC TO .05% | **DRIVING IMPAIRED .05-.09%** | **DO NOT DRIVE .10% & UP**

Source: NHTSA

The chart shows average responses. Younger people generally become impaired sooner, while older people have more vision problems at night. Tests show a wide range of responses even for people of the same age and weight. For some people, one drink may be too many.

Having a full stomach will postpone somewhat the effects of alcohol, but it will not keep you from becoming drunk.

Black coffee, cold showers, or walking around outdoors will do nothing to make you sober. Of course, someone who claims, "I'll be okay as soon as I get behind the wheel," may be making a fatal misjudgment.

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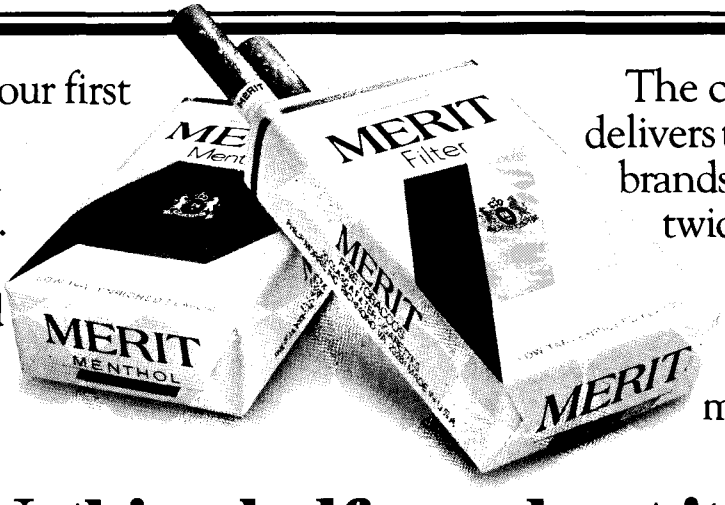

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